C.1 Introduction to Environmental Analysis

Section C describes the environmental assessment methodology used to identify potential environmental impacts associated with the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed Valley South Subtransmission Project (proposed Project). Each individual issue area discussion in Section C includes an overview of the Project site's regional, local, and regulatory setting. Section C.1.4 (Cumulative Scenario and Methodology) includes a list of cumulative projects, which is used as the basis for the discussion of cumulative impacts discussed in this section.

C.1.1 Organization of Section C

Based on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements, Section C evaluates thirteen issue areas. The CPUC prepared and published a Notice of Preparation (NOP) in May 2015 and held a 30-day comment period as required by CEQA. The NOP was distributed to the public, regulatory agencies, interested parties, and property owners within 300 feet of the proposed Project alignment. Seven comment letters were received from agencies and the public in response to the NOP (see Appendix 1). The analysis in this EIR considers the scoping comments received on the NOP prepared for the proposed Project and evaluates the following environmental issue areas:

- C.2 Aesthetics
- C.3 Agricultural Resources
- C.4 Air Quality
- C.5 Biological Resources
- C.6 Cultural and Paleontological Resources
- C.7 Geology and Soils
- C.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- C.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- C.10 Hydrology and Water Quality
- C.11 Land Use and Planning
- C.12 Noise
- C.13 Recreation
- C.14 Transportation and Traffic

C.1.2 Analytical Assumptions

The impact analysis was conducted with the following general assumptions:

- The laws, regulations, and policies applicable to the CPUC in authorizing right-of-way (ROW) grants for electrical transmission facilities would be applied consistently for the proposed Project.
- All applicable laws, regulations, and standards of the State of California would be applied consistently for the proposed Project.
- The Project applicant would obtain all required permits and approvals from other agencies and comply with all legally applicable terms and conditions associated with those permits and approvals.
- The proposed Project would be constructed, operated, and maintained as described in Section B (Project Description).
- Short-term impacts are those expected to occur during construction and are not expected to have lingering effects for an extended period after construction is completed. Long-term impacts are those that would occur during operation and maintenance of the proposed Project or that persist for an extended period after completion of construction.

C.1.3 Environmental Assessment Methodology

The methodology used to determine potential project impacts consists of four key components. Each of these components are summarized below and discussed in each issue area in Sections C.2 through C.14, which follow this introduction. Refer to Section D (Alternatives) for the alternatives to the Project that were evaluated in this report and to Section E (Other CEQA Considerations) for more information on other Project-related impacts.

- **Environmental Setting**. The environmental setting describes existing conditions on the Project site that may change as a result of the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed Project. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines (Section 15125(a)), the environmental setting used for the impact analysis reflects the conditions at the time of the issuance of the NOP (May 2015).
- **Regulatory Setting.** Each issue area includes a description of current land use policies and requirements that apply to the proposed Project.
- **Environmental Impacts and Mitigation**. This section evaluates the environmental impacts of the proposed Project based on predetermined, specific significance criteria. In determining the significance of impacts, the assessment considers the ability of existing agency requirements to reduce potential impacts. If an adverse impact is potentially significant despite existing requirements, mitigation measures are proposed to reduce or avoid the impact. Mitigation measures are only required for significant adverse impacts. Once impacts and mitigation measures, as applicable, are presented the "level of significance after mitigation" is determined.
- **Cumulative Impact Analysis**. This section addresses the geographic extent of the cumulative analysis and cumulative impacts for each environmental issue area.

CEQA requires that a significance determination be made for each adverse impact identified in an EIR. Significance criteria, based on the CEQA Guidelines Environmental Checklist (Appendix G), are identified for each environmental resource area. The significance criteria serve as a benchmark for determining if a project would result in significant adverse environmental impacts when evaluated against existing environmental conditions (baseline). Impacts are assessed relative to each impact criterion to determine whether the project would have an impact on the environment and to what level. Impacts are quantified to the extent possible, and mitigation measures identified to reduce impacts where possible.

CEQA requires that feasible mitigation measures be identified to reduce or avoid significant impacts. CEQA Guidelines Section 15370 define mitigation as:

(a) Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
(b) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation;
(c) Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;
(d) Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; and
(e) Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

To provide a systematic evaluation of potential environmental impacts, a classification system has been applied to the impacts of the proposed Project. These classifications indicate whether an identified impact is significant and whether mitigation measures can reduce the severity of the impact to a level that is not significant. The following classifications were uniformly applied in this EIR:

- **Class I: Significant impact; cannot be mitigated to a level that is not significant.** Class I impacts are significant adverse effects that cannot be mitigated below a level of significance through the application of feasible mitigation measures. Class I impacts are significant and unavoidable.
- **Class II: Significant impact; can be mitigated to a level that is not significant.** A Class II impact is a significant adverse effect that can be reduced to a less-than-significant level through the application of feasible mitigation measures presented in this EIR.
- **Class III: Adverse; less than significant.** A Class III impact is a minor change or effect on the environment that does not meet or exceed the criteria established to gauge significance.
- **Class IV: Beneficial impact.** Class IV impacts represent beneficial effects that would result from project implementation.

C.1.4 Cumulative Scenario and Methodology

Cumulative effects are those impacts from related projects that would occur in conjunction with the proposed Project. To document the process used to determine cumulative impacts, this section provides the CEQA requirements, the methodology used in the cumulative assessment, and the projects identified and applicable to the cumulative analysis. Sections C.2 through C.14 provide the analysis of cumulative impacts by environmental issue area.

CEQA Requirements

CEQA requires that cumulative impacts be analyzed in an EIR when the resulting impacts are cumulatively considerable, and therefore, potentially significant. The discussion of cumulative impacts must reflect the severity of the impacts, as well as the likelihood of their occurrence; however, the discussion does not need to be as detailed as the discussion of environmental impacts attributable to the proposed Project alone. Further, the discussion is intended to be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness. As stated in Public Resources Code Section 21083(b), "a project may have a significant effect on the environment if the possible effects of a project are individually limited but cumulatively considerable."

According to Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines:

> *Cumulative impacts refer to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.*
>
> *(a) The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.*
>
> *(b) The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.*

Further, according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 (a)(1):

> *As defined in Section 15355, a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts. An EIR should not discuss impacts which do not result in part from the project evaluated in the EIR.*

In addition, as stated in the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064(h)(4) it should be noted that:

> *The mere existence of significant cumulative impacts caused by other projects alone shall not constitute substantial evidence that the proposed project's incremental effects are cumulatively considerable.*

Therefore, the cumulative discussion in an EIR focuses on whether the impacts of the project under review are cumulatively considerable within the context of impacts caused by other past, present, or future projects. As noted earlier, the technical analyses in Sections C.2-C.14 (Cumulative Impacts) include the cumulative impact discussions for each issue area.

Methodology

The area evaluated under the cumulative scenario varies because the nature and range of potential effects differ by resource or issue. For instance, air quality impacts tend to disperse over a large area or region

whereas noise impacts are typically more localized in nature. For this reason, the geographic scope for the analysis of cumulative impacts must be identified for each resource area.

The analysis of cumulative effects considers a number of variables including geographic (spatial) limits, time (temporal) limits, and the characteristics of the resource being evaluated. The geographic scope of the analysis is based on the nature of the geography surrounding the proposed Project and the characteristics and properties of each resource and the region to which they apply. In addition, each project in a region will have its own implementation schedule, which may or may not coincide or overlap with the proposed Project's schedule. This is a consideration for short-term impacts associated with the proposed Project. Cumulative impacts may represent a "worst-case" scenario because some of the cumulative projects may not be built or some projects may be completed prior to the initiation of proposed Project construction.

Table C.1-1 lists current development projects within a one-mile radius of the proposed Project alignment. The table was based on information presented in Southern California Edison's (SCE) Proponents Environmental Assessment published in December 2014. To update the cumulative project list, an email was sent to applicable local jurisdictions requesting review of the project list. One response was received from the City of Menifee, which has been incorporated in the table. In addition, relevant and available databases were also reviewed, such as the Riverside County GIS Open Data Portal, to update the cumulative project list. Refer to Figure C.1-1 for the location of cumulative projects in relation to the project alignment.

Table C.1-1. Cumulative Projects Within One Mile of the Proposed Project [1]

Map ID No.	Project Name/ ID No.	Project Description	Location	Proximity to Proposed Project (Miles)	Status	Anticipated Construction Schedule
County of Riverside						
1	Rancho Bella Vista Specific Plan (TR36376 and TR31871)	Specific Plan	Located 1.2 miles east of Winchester Road, north of Murrieta Hot Springs Road, and adjacent to and west of Pourroy Avenue	0.03	The Rancho Bella Vista Specific Plan has been approved and grading permits have been issued by County of Riverside.	Not Available
2	French Valley Specific Plan (TR30696 and TR32289)	Specific Plan to allow ~1700 housing units (Includes area known as Spencer's Crossing, Map ID #19)	Located north of Los Alamos Road, east of Briggs Road, south of Keller Road, and west of Leon Road	0.07	The French Valley Specific Plan was approved in 2001 and grading and commercial permits have been issued by County of Riverside.	Not Available
3	TR30433 and MS4089	Residential and Street/Drainage/Water/Sewage Improvements	Located south of Pat Road, east of Briggs Road, west of Lasker Lane, and north of Baxter Road	0.76	The tentative tract map and improvement agreements have been approved and grading permits have been issued by County of Riverside.	Not Available
4	Farmer Boys Restaurant	Commercial	Located at the corner of Benton Road and SR-79	0.39	A commercial grading permit has been issued by County of Riverside.	Not Available
5	Dutch Village Specific Plan (TR31330)	Specific Plan	Located north of Auld Road and east of Leon Road	0.37	The Dutch Village Specific Plan has been approved and grading permits have been issued by County of Riverside.	Not Available
6	Crown Valley Village Specific Plan (TR28695)	Specific Plan	Located south of Auld Road, west of Pourroy Road, and north of the Rancho Bella Vista Specific Plan	0.92	The Crown Valley Village Specific Plan has been approved and grading permits have been issued by County of Riverside.	Not Available

Table C.1-1. Cumulative Projects Within One Mile of the Proposed Project [1]

Map ID No.	Project Name/ ID No.	Project Description	Location	Proximity to Proposed Project (Miles)	Status	Anticipated Construction Schedule
7	TR31118	Residential	Located north of Jean Nicholas Road, south of Dana Drive, and east of Leon Road	0.42	Grading permits have been issued by County of Riverside.	Not Available
8	157564	Fish hatchery	Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 461-140-050	0.36	A commercial permit has been issued by County of Riverside.	Not Available
9	413629	Add storage to manufacturing plant	APN 331-220-014	0.11	A commercial permit has been issued by County of Riverside.	Not Available
10	TR32185	Residential	Located north of Cookie Road, south of Ruff road, east of Leon Road, and west of Elliot Road and Winchester Road (SR 79)	0.34	A grading permit has been issued by County of Riverside.	Not Available
11	46006	Agriculture lab building	APN 461-140-049	0.21	A commercial permit has been issued by County of Riverside.	Not Available
12	73598	Commercial	APN 459-274-005	0.83	A commercial permit has been issued by County of Riverside.	Not Available
13	Church (BGR130072)	Grading for a church	APN 480-040-044	0.63	A grading permit has been issued by County of Riverside.	Not Available
14	Perris Union High School District (PUHSD) High School No. 4	High School	Located at the southeast corner of Leon Road and Wickerd Road	0	PUHSD is beginning planning for a third high school serving the City of Menifee.	Not Available
15	TR 29114	Residential		0.73		Not Available
16	TR 31347	Model Home Complex	Located north of Scott Road, south of Wickerd Road, East of Briggs Road, west of El Centro Lane	0.93		Not Available
17	TR 34324	Residential	Located north west of High Vista Drive, and Starflower Drive	0.77		Not Available
18	Pick A Lots Program (TR 30433)		Located north of Baxter Road, south of Pat Road, East of Briggs Road, West of Loan Road	0.60		Not Available
19	Amendment to French Valley Specific Plan (Spencer's Crossing)	Approx. 600-acre master planned community with up to 1,671 homes planned, plus a school, parks, and open space.	Located south of Scott Road, west of Leon Road, and east of Briggs Road, and north of Max Gillis Boulevard. French Valley area of the Riverside County	0	Reduced number of housing units in area covered by French Valley Specific Plan (same area as Map ID #2)[2]. As of summer 2013, over 500 homes were occupied.	Under Construction

Table C.1-1. Cumulative Projects Within One Mile of the Proposed Project [1]

Map ID No.	Project Name/ ID No.	Project Description	Location	Proximity to Proposed Project (Miles)	Status	Anticipated Construction Schedule
City of Menifee [3]						
20	2014-069 DA	Development agreement for a shopping center "Heritage Square."	Located at the northwest corner of McCall Boulevard and Menifee Road	0.88	Application active as of 3/5/2014. The development agreement has been approved.	2020
21	2013-146 PP	Revised plot plan for SCE Control Building	Entirely within Valley 500/115 kV Substation	0	Application active as of 8/1/2013. The building permits are in progress.	Not Available
22	TR 34406	Residential	APN 333-180-029	0.28	Application active as of 2/7/2014	Not Available
23	2013-205PM	Subdivide 4.55 acres on Palomar Road into four lots	APN 329-070-079	1.09	Application active as of 10/7/2013	Not Available
24	SP 2009-025 Fleming Ranch	Planning Application Specific Plan No. 2009-025 proposes the development of a 333.6 acre site with up to 1,588 residential units; an optional 12.2 acre elementary school site; open space, recreation and paseo uses on 47.6 acres; and mixed uses on 23.3 acres that could comprise residential, retail, office, light industrial, public facilities and/or recreational land uses.	APNs 333-020-003, -004, -006, -007; and 333-030-009	1.04	Application active as of 2/13/2009	Not Available
City of Murrieta [4]						
25	Metro PCS (MCUP-001-3066)	Commercial (Conditional Use Permit to co-locate six panel antennas and one 2-foot-diameter dish antenna onto the existing pole)	APN 963-060-031	0.50	A conditional use permit is in process by the City of Murrieta	Not Available
City of Perris [5]						
26	08-01-0007	Develop a concrete tilt-up building totaling 3.2 million square feet on 217 acres.	Located at the northeast corner of Redlands Avenue and Ellis Avenue	0.20	Project approved 7/13/2010	Not Available
27	10-01-0008	Proposal to construct a 43,000-square foot commercial center on 5 acres	Located on northwest corner of San Jacinto Avenue and Redlands Avenue	0.77	Project approved 6/29/2010 by the City of Perris	Not Available

Table C.1-1. Cumulative Projects Within One Mile of the Proposed Project [1]

Map ID No.	Project Name/ ID No.	Project Description	Location	Proximity to Proposed Project (Miles)	Status	Anticipated Construction Schedule
28	13-01-0007	The modified project will increase the residential units from 19 to 40 and reduce the commercial component from 17,000 square feet to 1,000 square feet for retail and 2,000 square feet for a day care facility requiring a Conditional Use Permit	Located at the corner of D Street and 10th Street	0.54	Project approved 2/20/2013 by the City of Perris	Not Available
29	33549	127 residential lot subdivision	Located on the northeast corner of Perris Boulevard and Commercial Street	0.16	The final map of the project was approved by the City of Perris	Not Available
30	06-0337	Develop a 484,300-square-foot commercial retail shopping center on 58.8 acres.	Located at the southeast corner of Interstate 215 and Ethanac Road	0.61	Project approved 4/16/2008 by the City of Perris	Not Available
City of Temecula						
31	Roripaugh Ranch	Specific Plan	APN 964-180-013	0.02	The specific plan has been approved by the City of Temecula	Not Available
32	Seraphina	Residential	Located on the north side of Nicolas Road and east side of Joseph Road	0.01	Tentative tract map has been approved by the city of Temecula	Not Available
33	Walcott Estates	Residential	Located on the west side of Butterfield Stage Road, east of Walcott Lane, north of La Serena, and south of Calle Chapos	0.96	Tentative tract map has been approved by the City of Temecula	Not Available
SCE Projects						
34	PIN 4087	Install neutral impedance on transformers	Entirely within Valley 500/115 kV Substation	0	Active	2017
35	PIN 6446	Install Phasor Measurement Unit	Entirely within Valley 500/115 kV Substation	0	Active	2018
36	PIN 6092	Minor amount of 115 kV switchrack reconfiguration	Entirely within Valley 500/115 kV Substation	0	Active	2018
37	PIN 6197	Install Dissolved Gas Analysis equipment and bushing monitoring on transformers	Entirely within Valley 500/115 kV Substation	0	Active	2017

Table C.1-1. Cumulative Projects Within One Mile of the Proposed Project [1]

Map ID No.	Project Name/ ID No.	Project Description	Location	Proximity to Proposed Project (Miles)	Status	Anticipated Construction Schedule
38	PIN STL26578	Replace TSP and reconfigure Auld-Moraga #2, Valley-Triton, and Pauba-Triton Subtransmission Lines	Located on south side of Nicolas Road west of Triton 115/12 kV Substation	0	Active	2021

Source: SCE, 2014; City of Menifee, 2015; County of Riverside, 2015; County of Riverside 2013; Spencer's Crossing, 2015; T&B Planning, 2015.
Note(s):

1 There may be other projects near the alignment that were previously approved, but have not yet been constructed as of the publication of this EIR. It is possible these additional projects may begin to be constructed and would therefore contribute to cumulative impacts. Also see table note 2 below.
2 Based on the website for Spencer's Crossing (http://spencerscrossing.com/location), residential development in the area of the French Valley Specific Plan may extend as far north as Scott Road. However, the only information available was for the French Valley Specific Plan and amendment, which goes to Keller Road. Therefore, only information from the French Valley Specific Plan and amendment is presented in the table.
3 Some of the cumulative projects listed under the City of Menifee are located over 1 mile from the proposed Project. However, they are included in this table as they are located within 1 mile of Material Staging Yard 4. Specifically, cumulative project no. 2013-205PM is located 0.82 of a mile from Material Staging Yard 4.
4 The Spencer's Crossing development website (Spencer's Crossing, 2015) identifies "Murrieta" as the location for this development; however, the majority of the development is located within an unincorporated area of Riverside County. Therefore, this project has been identified under the County of Riverside (Items #2 and #19).
5 The cumulative projects listed under the City of Perris are all located over 1 mile from the proposed Project. However, they are included in this table as they are all located within 1 mile of the material staging yards. Specifically, cumulative project no. 08-01-0007 is located 0.20 of a mile from Material Staging Yard 3, cumulative project no. 10-01-0008 is located 0.77 of a mile from Material Staging Yard 3, cumulative project no. 13-01-0007 is located 0.54 of a mile from Material Staging Yard 3, cumulative project no. 33549 is located 0.16 of a mile from Material Staging Yard 3, and cumulative project no. 06-0337 is located 0.61 of a mile from Material Statging Yard 4.

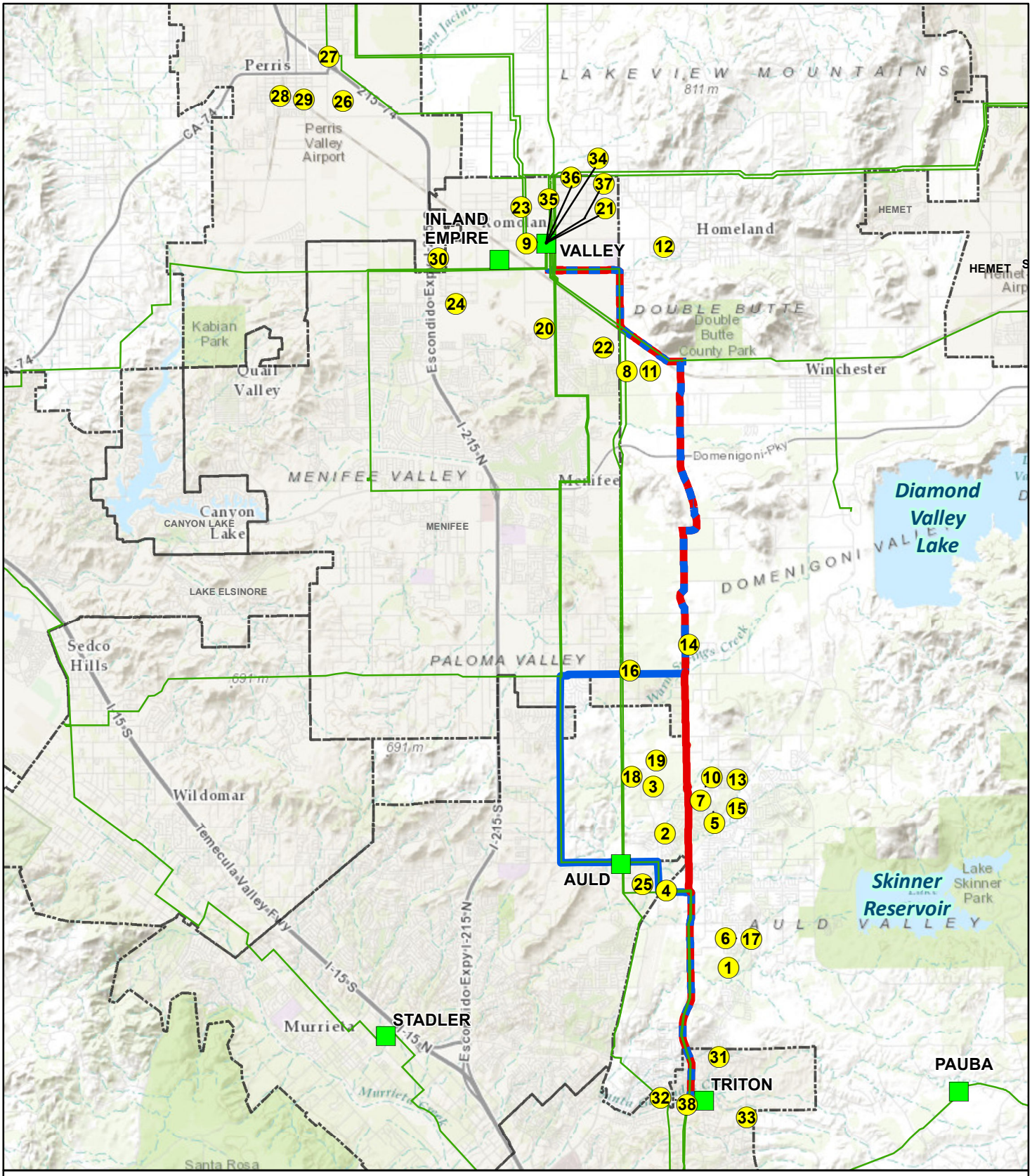
C.1.5 Applicant-Proposed Measures

In addition to the Project design features described in Section B (Project Description) and ordinary construction/operating restrictions included as part of the proposed Project, SCE would also incorporate applicant-proposed measures (APMs) developed by SCE specifically for the proposed Project. Table B-18 (Applicant-Proposed Measures) identifies the APMs and indicates the component of the proposed Project they apply to. These measures are part of the proposed Project and are considered in the evaluation of environmental impacts. CPUC approval would be based upon SCE adhering to the proposed Project as described in this document, including the project description and the APMs, as well as any adopted mitigation measures that result from the evaluation in this EIR.

C.1.6 Mitigation Monitoring

Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 establishes two distinct requirements for agencies involved in the CEQA process. Subdivisions (a) and (b) of the section relate to mitigation monitoring and reporting, and the obligation to mitigate significant effects where possible. Pursuant to subdivision (a), whenever a public agency completes an EIR and makes a finding pursuant to Section 21081(a) of the Public Resources Code taking responsibility for mitigation identified in the EIR, the agency must adopt a program of monitoring or reporting that ensures compliance with mitigation measures during implementation of the project.

As required by CEQA and depending on the decision on the proposed Project, the CPUC would adopt a mitigation and monitoring program to ensure compliance with the recommended mitigation measures identified in this EIR. The mitigation and monitoring program for the proposed Project will be included in the Final EIR consistent with CEQA requirements.



Cumulative Projects
Existing Substation
Existing Subtransmission Line
Proposed 115 kV Subtransmission Line
Common to Both
Alternative 115 kV Subtransmission Line
City Boundaries

0 1.5 3 Miles

Figure C.1-1

Cumulative Projects