

**4.2 AESTHETICS****4.2.1 Introduction**

Visual resources of a given area consist of the landforms, vegetation, water features, and cultural modifications (physical changes caused by human activities) that impart an overall visual impression of the area landscape. A number of factors are considered in the evaluation of a landscape's visual resources and of the potential for one or more visual impacts to occur with the introduction of a project. These factors include visual quality, viewer sensitivity, landscape visibility, and viewer exposure.

Impacts to visual resources may occur when a project alters the visual quality or landscape visibility (scenic views) of the area in which the project is located. The level of viewer sensitivity and existing view quality would affect the severity of the impact.

This section addresses the visual resources environmental baseline conditions and the potential for Segments 2 and 3 of the proposed Antelope Transmission Project to create impacts to visual resources in the project study area, as defined by CEQA and relevant local plans and ordinances.

**4.2.1.1 Methodology**

Baseline data collection was initiated with a review of the existing project information, including project area strip maps, project plans, and aerial photos, in order to gain familiarity with the project requirements. A field survey of the project area was conducted to evaluate the existing landscape setting and visual resource issues of concern including sensitive land uses adjacent to or crossed by the proposed and alternative T/Ls and substation facilities.

During field studies, the project landscapes were viewed to the extent feasible from public roads and vantage points in order to develop an overall assessment of landscape characteristics and the potential for project impacts based on visibility from public areas. Key Viewing Areas (KVAs) were identified at critical locations along the Segment 2 and 3 T/L routes. Locations of KVAs are indicated on Maps 5.2-1 through 5.2-3 in Section 5.2.

KVAs are generally selected for one or two reasons: 1) the location provides representative views of the landscape along a specific route segment or in a general region of interest; and/or 2) the viewpoint effectively captures the presence or absence of a potentially significant project impact in that location. KVAs are typically established in locations that provide high visibility to “relatively” large numbers of viewers and/or sensitive viewing locations such as residential areas, recreation areas, and vista points.

Baseline photos from KVAs Seg 2-1 through Seg 2-3 and Seg 3-1 through Seg 3-3 and computer-generated simulations of the proposed project from each KVA are presented on Figures 5.2-1 through 5.2-6 in Section 5.2. Each baseline photo is labeled as Photo A and project simulations are labeled Photo B.

Photos were taken with a Canon high-resolution digital camera. Camera settings were selected to produce an image that is identical to images produced by a Single Lens Reflex (SLR) 35-mm camera with a 50-mm lens. SLR images are considered representative of views as seen by the unaided human eye. A study of the project information and plans were then used to create perspective sketches and digital simulation renderings using Adobe Photoshop.

#### **4.2.1.2 Grading of Views and Visual Quality**

In the process of identifying the characteristics and quality of views it is helpful to provide working definitions of the terms used. These terms identify the basic values and gradations applied to particular scenes prior to the application of the applicant proposed project. They are used in the balance of Section 4.2.

##### **4.2.1.2.1 Visual Quality.** (impression/appeal of existing landforms)

- **Low:** Landforms are indistinct and generally characterized by level or gently sloping terrain with minimal vertical elements. Vegetation is relatively dispersed and has low scenic character in its mass, color and variety. There are minimal accent elements such as significant water bodies, rocks, bluffs or distant mountain ranges. Example: High desert areas near Barstow or Yermo.
- **Medium:** Landforms are characterized as common in the region and typically involve rolling hills and some distinguished forms and vertical elements. Vegetation is more noticeable with trees, grass fields, dense chaparral areas, and greater color or variety which adds to scenic interest. There may be features such as noticeable permanent water bodies, rock outcrops and mountain backdrops.
- **High:** Landforms will be distinctive and “worth a trip” to visit; they are typically characterized by significant vertical elements, valleys, bluffs or perhaps other distinctive forms or colors such as the painted desert in the southwest. Vegetation will also be distinct with forest outcroppings or other major or landmark scenic elements. Example: Big Sur Coast of California.

##### **4.2.1.2.2 Viewer Sensitivity.** (viewer perceptions/expectations as they pass through an area)

- **Low:** Viewers have minimal expectations. They will use a route on a routine basis (commuting) or for purposes other than to enjoy the view. Typical is the use of major

highways or interstates where the emphasis is on arriving at the destination. Example: Interstate 405 through Los Angeles.

- **Medium:** Viewers have some expectations of scenic variety – for example, they will choose the route because it is interesting, has variety, or is new to the user.
- **High:** Viewers will select a park or transportation route because of its scenic character. Example: Yosemite.

**4.2.1.2.3 Viewer Exposure.** (includes number of viewers, time of exposure and whether the view is directly visible)

- **Low:** Typically the number of viewers for a transportation corridor is less than 500 to 1000 per day. The time of exposure is less than 30 seconds. The view of the affected area is not in the primary cone of vision for a driver or affecting the main view from a scenic vista.
- **Medium:** Typically the number of viewers along a transportation corridor is between 1,000 and 5,000 (a typical street). View duration may be up to a minute. The affected area will be more noticeable than in the low category.
- **High:** Typically, for a transportation corridor, the number of viewers is in excess of 5,000 (highways and freeways). View duration is more than a minute. The affected area is directly visible either in the primary cone of vision of a traveler or affects the main view from a scenic vista.

Note: The above guidance is general in nature and sometimes must be adapted to more specific criteria. This may be the case where there are atypical circumstances (e.g., a major reservoir may have more scenic value in the desert than near the California coast) or where a local agency may by fiat have set special criteria; e.g., the state of California may have designated a scenic highway.

## 4.2.2 Regional Setting

### 4.2.2.1 Segment 2

The Antelope Substation and the 20.0 miles of 500 kV T/L route and 0.5 mile of 220 kV T/L route as well as the Vincent Substation associated with Segment 2 of the Antelope Transmission Project are located in northern Los Angeles County. The proposed 500 kV T/L route parallels an existing T/L corridor for most of the route to the Vincent Substation. The only deviation from the existing corridor is the portion of the proposed route between MPs 8.1 and 14.8 to be constructed through open space areas on the planned Ritter Ranch and Anaverde developments. The 0.5 mile of proposed 220 kV T/L route is located north of the Vincent Substation. The project T/L route locations are indicated on Figure 3-1, General

Location Map, and Map 5.2-1, Segment 2. The proposed T/L route passes through undeveloped rural areas, agricultural areas, and areas proposed for suburban development near Palmdale.

The northern portion of Segment 2 is a landscape void of major visual features in the area adjacent to the Antelope Substation. About 4.5 miles south of the substation, the topography rises over the Portal Ridge, which has some modest vegetation and then drops into Leona Valley (the San Andreas Rift Zone) as shown on Photo No. 3. Southeast from the Leona Valley is the Anaverde Valley, which is flat and relatively devoid of significant vegetation, but has several large-scale developments proposed in the area as an extension of the City of Palmdale. The T/L corridor then traverses approximately 4.5 miles of the relatively inaccessible, rugged, and sparsely vegetated unincorporated Los Angeles County lands until exiting into the Soledad Canyon area. Soledad Canyon is a major transportation corridor and includes Highway 14, Soledad Canyon Road, and the railroad commute corridor between Palmdale and Los Angeles.

Overall, the visual quality of the area varies from moderate (see definitions provided in Section 4.2.1.2 above) in the eastern Leona Valley area to moderately low in the in the relatively open landscape of the Antelope Substation area, the Portal and Ritter Ridge areas, and the relatively inaccessible land north of Soledad Canyon. The visual quality is low in the Soledad Canyon to Vincent area given the presence of the highway, railroad, and the existing T/Ls.

Viewer exposure is relatively low, given the few residences and minimal traffic, in all areas except the Soledad Canyon area where it is high given the intense use of Highway 14.

#### **4.2.2.2 Segment 3**

The Antelope Substation and the southern 10.5 miles of the proposed and alternative T/L route associated with Segment 3 of the Antelope Transmission Project are located in northern Los Angeles County. The remainder of approximately 25 miles is in Kern County jurisdiction. The project location is indicated on Figure 3-1, General Location Map, and Map 5.2-1, Segment 3.

The proposed and alternative T/L routes pass through undeveloped rural areas and agricultural areas, and terminate in the industrial wind turbine fields near Tehachapi. The southern portion of Segment 3 is a flat, occasionally farmed landscape void of major visual features in the immediate foreground. Agriculture is a more predominant feature of the central portion of the corridor north to the Willow Springs Butte area. The countryside then transitions to one of rolling topography, occasional old mining sites, and open scrub land until the vicinity of Oak Creek Road. At this point, the industrial complex of the wind

turbines and Cal Cement dominate the man-generated land uses of the area. The last link of the transmission route then traverses the eastern extension of the Tehachapi Mountains crossing Cameron Canyon Road and the Pacific Crest Trail before dropping into the Highway 58 corridor area.

Overall, the visual quality of the area varies from moderately low in the flat open space and agricultural portions of the Antelope Valley to moderate in the Oak Creek Road area (Substation One) over the Tehachapi Mountains to the north. The quality then drops to moderately low in the area of Substation Two.

Overall viewer exposure to the project is relatively low, given the few residences and minimal traffic, in all areas except the Highway 58 corridor area where it is high given the relatively heavy use of this route.

#### **4.2.2.3 Alternatives**

In Segment 2, the regional setting is generally the same for the proposed project and Alternative AV1. Alternative AV2 provides an alternative route along the existing SCE T/L corridor in contrast to the loop of the proposed T/L through open space areas on the Ritter Ranch and Anaverde developments. In Segment 3 The regional setting for T/L route Alternatives A, B, and C and applicable substation alternatives is generally the same as described previously for the proposed project for the area between the Antelope Substation and Substation One. Between Substation One and Substation Two, Alternative C crosses a more scenic portion of Cameron Canyon Road than does the proposed route.

### **4.2.3 Planning and Future Development Context**

#### **4.2.3.1 Segment 2**

Land uses in the area south of the Antelope Substation are low-density rural and no new projects are known for this area until the area known as Quartz Hill in west Lancaster is reached (approximately MP 3.5). At this point, there is active construction of new subdivisions at the base of Portal Ridge that are adjacent to the proposed T/L route and the existing T/L corridor in this area. Review with the city planners indicates two projects, one for 158 units on 75 acres and one for an unknown number that is in the pre-application process at this point.

The next area where there are known development proposals is the area of the Ritter Ranch (western Palmdale) where a specific plan has been filed. The general development areas include areas both northeast and southwest of the proposed T/L. In addition, the Anaverde Specific Plan (formerly the City Ranch Specific Plan) calls for development just east of the

Ritter Ranch. This development, now under construction, includes open space around the existing T/L corridor.

South of Anaverde, the land is under unincorporated Los Angeles County jurisdiction and no known future development is proposed with the exception of the proposed Palmdale 1000 development (refer to Figures 3-1 and 3-2). The proposed Segment 2 T/L route traverses the extreme southwest corner of this proposed development. At the southern end of Segment 2 is the Soledad Canyon area. Again, this area is fully occupied by the transportation corridor and the Vincent Substation. No known future development is proposed in this area.

#### **4.2.3.2 Segment 3**

Land uses in the area north of the Antelope Substation are low density rural. No major changes are projected for this component of Segment 3. At Avenue H, a large development known as the Del Sur Ranch is proposed in western Lancaster. The proposed T/L route passes immediately to the west of the land designated for development, though the details of this proposal are not known at this time. The only other known residential development near the proposed T/L route is the Copa De Oro/Kern Ross Estates project (west of MP 10.5), however, the closest portion of this project is located approximately 0.33 mile west of the proposed T/L route and would not be visually affected by the proposed project.

Both in the intervening area between these two projects and further north in the Antelope Valley, the general agricultural character of the land uses is projected to remain much as it is today.

At the northern end (Oak Creek Road and cresting the Tehachapi Mountains) there are no known residential proposals for the area, which is otherwise devoted to industrial and wind turbine uses.

#### **4.2.3.3 Alternatives**

In Segment 2, the planning and future development context is generally the same for the proposed project and Alternative AV1. Alternative AV2 provides an alternative route along the existing SCE T/L corridor in contrast to the loop of the proposed T/L through the Ritter Ranch and Anaverde developments.

In Segment 3, the planning and future development context for T/L route Alternatives A, B, and C and applicable substation alternatives is generally the same as described previously for the proposed project for the area between the Antelope Substation and Substation One. Between Substation One and Substation Two, Alternative C crosses a rural residential area (3 homes) in the vicinity of the Cameron Canyon Road crossing.

**4.2.4 Summary of Adopted Plans and Policies**

This section provides an overview of applicable visual resource policies along each of the project segments. The proposed and alternative T/L routes where the project would occur pass through different jurisdictions with different plans outlining goals and policies for protection of visual resources. Components of the project also cross Highways 58 and 138 in Kern County and Highway 14 in Los Angeles County. None of these highway segments are identified as Officially Designated Scenic Highways by Caltrans, however, Highway 58 in Kern County is identified as an eligible highway.

**4.2.4.1 Segment 2**

Segment 2 is within the jurisdictional boundaries of Los Angeles County and the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale. The applicable Los Angeles County General Plan policies are discussed below.

Under the Conservation, Open Space, and Recreation Element of the current LA County General Plan (1980a), areas of scenic value including ridgelines, as seen from public viewpoints, should be protected (Policy 19). A general overview of environmental resources (Section 3.g, page OS-5) in the Conservation Element indicates that certain roads passing through the Angeles National Forest are considered scenic routes. However, no proposed or alternate Segment 2 T/L routes are within the Angeles National Forest.

Section 15 of Appendix A of the Land Use Element (1980b) provides General Conditions and Standards for Development pertaining to Scenic Highways. The standards direct development within proposed and designated scenic corridors to enhance and complement scenic views (Section 15, Standard 2, page LU-A19), but are not more specific.

Policies in the Environmental Resources Element of the City of Palmdale General Plan (1993) protect visual resources from development which could result in negative impacts. Specifically, development which could alter the character of significant ridgelines including the Ritter, Portal, and Sierra Pelona ridges is discouraged (Policy ER 1.2.1). The Environmental Resources Element also identifies Elizabeth Lake Road, Bouquet Canyon Road, and Goode Hill Road as city scenic roadways. Policy ER 1.2.2 requires that development along scenic roadways follow special design standards, however, these design standards are not established (reference pages ER-4 and ER-19 of the element).

**4.2.4.2 Segment 3**

The southern portion of Segment 3 is located in Los Angeles County, with the majority of the segment within Kern County. The Los Angeles County General Plan policies discussed for Segment 2 above are also applicable to Segment 3.

The Circulation Element of the Kern County General Plan (2004c) identifies Highway 58 between Mojave and Boron as Scenic Route No. 2, but makes no mention of the area between Tehachapi and Mojave. Policies regarding the protection of designated scenic routes call for the creation of standards; however, no scenic corridor standards are included in the General Plan.

#### **4.2.4.3 Alternatives**

The applicability of adopted plans and policies to the proposed and alternative Segment 2 and Segment 3 project facilities is the same for the proposed and alternative components from a visual perspective.

#### **4.2.5 Visual Context**

The R-O-W visual context is linear and, therefore, evaluated in a series of sectors identified by route MPs given the character of the T/L route(s). The visual contexts identified below are utilized in identifying potential impacts in Section 5.2 (Aesthetics) of this PEA.

##### **4.2.5.1 Segment 2**

**4.2.5.1.1 Antelope Substation Area to Portal Ridge (MP 0.0 – 4.5).** From the Antelope Substation to the base of the Portal Ridge, the land is flat with scattered ranches until the area of Avenue M and 75<sup>th</sup> Street W. is reached (see Context Photo No. 1, Figure 4.2-1). There are few residents or viewers of the proposed extension to the existing corridor (i.e., addition of new 500 kV T/L parallel to the existing T/L corridor). The only substantial street is Avenue K, which has relatively low usage. The immediate visual landscape is devoid of major features.

This condition is true until the end of this section at the base of Portal Ridge where there are several subdivisions under construction in the Avenue M area (see Context Photo No. 2). In this case there would be more viewers, but for the most part they would see the T/L within the context of the existing corridor and the views of the Portal Ridge. The most significant local feature would be more obscured by adjacent houses than by the T/L.

**4.2.5.1.2 Leona Valley/Palmdale (MP 4.5 – 15.1).** The proposed T/L crosses the Portal Ridge and drops into the eastern end of the Leona Valley as it crests into the Anaverde Creek area. The northern portion of this section is the most scenic component of Segment 2 (see Context Photos No. 3 and No. 4, Figure 4.2-2). Photo No. 3 shows the existing transmission corridor crossing the Portal Ridge/Ritter Ridge in the vicinity of Goode Hill Road and demonstrates the rolling hills and vegetative character of the area.



The southern portion of this sector is more barren where the T/L transitions southeast and skirts BLM lands near the Anaverde Creek area (see Context Photo No. 5, Figure 4.2-3).

The visual quality of the area is rated moderate for the Leona Valley portion and moderately low for the Anaverde Creek area.

At present there are few travelers in the area. The primary road is Elizabeth Lake Road (see Context Photo No. 4). Duration of views of the transmission corridor area is moderate.

The addition of houses with proposed construction in the Ritter Ranch and Anaverde Specific Plans would significantly change the landscape from open space/rural to residential.

**4.2.5.1.3 Ritter Ridge to Soledad Canyon (MP 15.1 – 20.2).** This sector of land is inaccessible to all but those using four-wheel drive vehicles. The landscape character is very rugged with minimal scrub vegetation. The overall character can be seen in the background of Context Photos No. 5 and No. 6 on Figure 4.2-3.

The proposed T/L would be added to the existing corridor and views of the new towers and lines would be seen in this context.

**4.2.5.1.4 Vincent Substation (MP 20.2 – 21.5).** This section of the proposed T/L route covers the upper reach of Soledad Canyon just before it exits into the Antelope Valley at Soledad Pass. In the space of a half a mile, there is the six-lane Highway 14, the two-lane Soledad Canyon Road, the Metro Commute/Union Pacific Railroad, and the Soledad wash, as well as four existing T/Ls. The area is already visually impacted and relatively devoid of any major visual features though it is enclosed on the north and south by low lying hills sparsely covered with scrub. The visual quality of the area is described as low (degraded) given the urban nature of the transportation corridor and lack of any distinguishing visual features. (See Photo 6, Figure 4.2-3).

The final connecting link to the Vincent Substation crosses the Soledad wash and connects to the substation from the west. While this link/substation area is visible from Highway 14 and seen against the backdrop of the Angeles National Forest, it is nearly 1 mile from the direct viewing point for northbound travelers and does not silhouette against the hills to the east. Angeles National Forest Road (N3) passes to the east of the substation and is the gateway to this component of the National Forest. There are numerous existing T/Ls terminating at Vincent Substation. This is represented by Context Photo No. 7, Figure 4.2-4.

The number of travelers viewing this sector from Highway 14 is very high though the duration of viewing the T/L corridor directly is relatively short and would be seen within the context of the existing corridor.

**4.2.5.2 Segment 3**

**4.2.5.2.1 Antelope Substation Area (MP 0.0 – 2.0).** From the Antelope Substation to the point where the proposed T/L diverges from the existing T/L corridor the land is flat and devoid of significant visual features. There are few residents or viewers of the extension of the existing corridor. The only substantial street is Avenue I which is also called the Lancaster Highway and connects Lancaster to Gorman on Interstate 5. This road has moderate usage but does pass through the Antelope Valley Poppy Reserve approximately 5 miles to the west. The immediate visual landscape is devoid of major features though Portal Ridge does provide a visual backdrop to the view to the southwest approximately 5 miles distant (see Photo No. 8, Figure 4.2-4). There are few residents in this area. The scenic quality is rated as moderate to moderate-low.

**4.2.5.2.2 105<sup>th</sup>/107<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Antelope Valley (MP 2.0 – 22.6).** At MP 2.4, the proposed T/L corridor diverges from the existing corridor and starts its northern heading along 105<sup>th</sup> Street W. for about 2.5 miles before realigning with 100<sup>th</sup> Street W. about 18 miles to the north.

At the southern end of this sector, the land is completely flat and almost unpopulated (see Photo No. 9, Figure 4.2-5). In this photo, the Tehachapi Mountains are barely visible at the horizon and the wind farms can be seen on a clear day. Willow Springs Butte is the low hill visible at photo middle right. The right-hand portion of the grassland shown on Photo No. 9 is part of the proposed Del Sur Ranch development. The western portion of the development would abut the proposed T/L corridor for 1.5 miles.

Just beyond the small rise crossed by a dirt road where the vegetation changes to scrub, the land use changes to scattered farms and ranches. This land use is somewhat intensified at the northern portion of Los Angeles County in the areas from Avenue B to Rosamond Boulevard. The characteristics of this sector are represented by Photo No. 10, Figure 4.2-5, which is taken at the intersection of 105<sup>th</sup> Street W and Avenue C. The land remains flat, but some of the farms have planted trees as can be seen in the photo. At this point, there is a power line as evidenced by the wood poles on the east of 105<sup>th</sup> Street W.

The visual quality of this sector is rated as moderately low. There are very few travelers, almost all locals, and few residents immediately adjacent to the proposed corridor.

**4.2.5.2.3 Oak Creek/Substation One (MP 22.6 – 25.6).** At MP 22.6, after crossing Tehachapi Willow Springs Road, the Los Angeles Aqueduct, and a petroleum pipeline, the proposed T/L route angles northeast from the 105<sup>th</sup> Street W corridor and traverses the open scrub area of the Oak Creek Wash. The land in this area is more undulating and vegetation is characterized as low scrub. The area is almost completely devoid of roads or human

habitation. The only distinguishing visual characteristics are an occasional abandoned mining site and the Tehachapi Mountains to the north. The proposed T/L then reaches Oak Creek Road, proposed Substation One, and the nearly 5 miles of wind turbine farms fronting on Oak Creek Road.

The overall visual quality of this sector is moderate given the more varied landforms that are relatively undisturbed by human activity. The number of viewers is extremely low as access, until one reaches Oak Creek Road, has to be by four wheel drive vehicles.

**4.2.5.2.4 Oak Creek Road Corridor (MP 25.6 – 31.0).** This 5.4-mile-long section generally heads west following Oak Creek Road from Substation One to the point where the T/L route turns north at MP 31.0

This section is characterized by major wind turbine farms on the north (Midwind, Dutchwind, Morwind, etc.), the Sagebrush 220 kV T/L, as well as SCE's existing 66 kV lines, and relatively open country on the south. The view of Oak Creek Road at 80<sup>th</sup> Street is seen on Context Photo No. 11 showing the open area to the left and the Cal Cement operation photo center right (see open hill/excavation). The western portion of this section enters Oak Creek Canyon north and west of the Cal Cement facility. Thus, the views south of the corridor have a moderate visual quality. This is the area proposed for Substation One.

The area from north of Oak Creek Road viewing west, the context in which the T/L would be seen, is generally adjacent to the wind turbine farms and the visual quality is moderate/low given the visual clutter of the wind generators (see Context Photo No. 12 viewing along Oak Creek Road east toward Mojave; the windmills can be seen on the left).

The majority of travelers along this stretch of Oak Creek Road, based upon field observation, are employees or service support to the wind farms or Cal Cement and are relatively few in number. The duration of view would be long since the road parallels the proposed T/L route.

**4.2.5.2.5 Oak Creek Road/Tehachapi Mountains (MP 31.0 – 35.2).** The final 4.2 miles of the proposed T/L route reaching north from Oak Creek Road to proposed Substation Two parallels an existing 66 kV line and crosses open country over the Tehachapi Mountains. The line skirts several of the existing wind farms that are located in this area. While the area would be moderately scenic in its natural state, the addition of the many windfarms has degraded it to moderate/low in visual quality.

General public vehicular access occurs only where the line crosses Tehachapi Willow Springs Road (twice) at MPs 30.7 and 31.4; otherwise, the area is closed to public usage (see context Photo 13, Figure 4.2-7). The only exception is where the T/L route crosses the pedestrian Pacific Crest Trail near MP 31.1 adjacent to the Midwind facility. Use of this portion of the trail is very low but it is a designated recreation area located for its scenic

qualities. This portion of the trail north of the proposed T/L meanders past several windfarms. The southwestern component of the trail crosses Tehachapi Willow Springs Road and proceeds southwest up Oak Creek Canyon into the higher portion of the Tehachapi Mountains.

The number of travelers in the area is very low and their expectations, with the exception of users of the Pacific Crest Trail, would be moderate.

**4.2.5.2.6 Substation Two Area/Monolith (MP 35.0)**. Proposed Substation Two is located at the intersection of Highline (a ranch road at this location) and Monolith (a short connecting road between the Highway 58 frontage road and the General Electric assembly and maintenance plant for the windfarms). This area is relatively rolling with a coverage of scrub. Context Photo No. 14, Figure 4.2-7 shows the view from the intersection of Highline and Monolith facing southwest with the Tehachapi Mountains in the background. Facing north it is approximately 0.5 mile to State Highway 58 and then an additional 3,000 feet to the Union Pacific Railroad and the large cement plant in Monolith. East and west is the Tehachapi valley floor with occasional farms but for the most part scrub. To the immediate south and southeast is a major windfarm area. The visual quality is moderate/low given the general flatness of the topography, the lack of significant vegetation, and the overall character of the windfarm and the railroad and cement plant.

Views to the site are relatively limited. It is not particularly visible from Highway 58 where the most obvious viewing position is more than a mile away. There are no local through roads. The Pacific Crest Trail is cut off from this location by a 600-foot-high ridge of the Tehachapi Mountain range capped with windmill farms. Visual sensitivity to travelers is classified as low.

### **4.2.5.3 Alternatives**

The visual context for the proposed and alternative Segment 2 project facilities is generally as described in Section 4.2.2.3.

The visual context for Segment 3 T/L route Alternatives A, B, and C and applicable substation alternatives are generally the same as described previously for the corresponding portions of the proposed project. The only exception is that Alternative C between Substations One and Two would cross the Tehachapi Mountains approximately 2 miles east of the proposed route. This location takes the Alternative C T/L route through a more scenic and residential portion of Cameron Canyon when compared to the proposed route.