

5.19 Mandatory Findings of Significance

MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (<i>Cumulatively considerable</i> means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Does the project have environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Significance criteria established by CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G.

- a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. As described in Section 5.4, Biological Resources, the project could result in impacts to habitats that support sensitive species. However, implementation of the Applicant Proposed Measures BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3, BIO-4 and BIO-5 and Mitigation Measures B-1, B-2, B-3, AQ-1, H-1, H-2, and HYD-1 described in Section 5.4.2 would reduce these potential impacts to less than significant levels. Similarly, Section 5.5, Cultural Resources, shows that the project would have a less than significant impact to important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.

As described in Section 5.5, Cultural Resources, the Proposed Project could have an adverse effect on cultural resources, either by itself or cumulatively with other projects. With implementation of Applicant Proposed Measures PA-1 and Mitigation Measures C-1 through C-7, the project would not eliminate important examples of major periods of California history or prehistory.

- b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. CEQA defines a cumulative impact as an effect that is created as a result of the combination of the Proposed Project together with other projects (past, present, or future) causing related impacts. Cumulative impacts of a project need to be evaluated when the project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable and, therefore, potentially significant.

A list of cumulative projects used for this analysis is provided in Table 5.19-1. The list includes projects in the vicinity of the project area in unincorporated Kern County and the City of Tehachapi. The projects were reviewed to identify whether the Proposed Project could contribute to cumulatively significant impacts when evaluated in combination with other projects. All of the projects are located more than a mile from the proposed substation site.

Table 5.19-1. Planned and Current Projects in the Vicinity of the Proposed Project

Project Name	Address	Proximity to Substation Site (approx. miles)	Type of Development	Status	Size (approx. acres unless noted)
Renia Boudaghian/ AT&T	Cummings Valley Road Near Renta St.	3.2	80 ft monopole	Construction 2014 or 2015	
Sturn, Pete & Terri	Highline Rd & Easy St	4	Equestrian facility	In suspense, per County	2.6
Mitchell, B.J.	Red Apple and Reeves St	7.5	Performing Arts Center	Going to EIR review, in suspense per County	7
Wal-Mart Super Center	Tucker Rd/Hwy 202, south of Tehachapi Boulevard	7.6	Shopping center	In litigation	23
O'Reilly Auto Parts	700 Tucker Road	7.8	Commercial	Under construction	7,453 sq.ft.
Red Apple Pavilion	Southwest corner of Tucker Road and Red Apple Drive	8	Commercial Center	Application submitted, CEQA review underway	13.9
Two professional office buildings	707 Valley Boulevard west of Mountain View Avenue	8.2	Office	Phase 1 completed and occupied; Phase II under construction	12,107 sq.ft.
Professional Building	West "J" Street near North Mill Street	8.6	Professional building	No current activity	8,211 sq.ft.
Tehachapi Hospital Complex	Voyager Drive and Challenger Drive	9	Hospital	Under construction	77,889 sq.ft.
Medical Office Buildings	North and adjacent to Athens Street, east of Voyager, west of Challenger Drive	9.1	Office buildings	No current activity	66,000 sq.ft.
Motel	Capital Hills Business Park: Capital Hills Parkway, east of Magellan Drive, west of Challenger Drive	9.1	72 room motel	Approved January 2013, no current activity	26,061 sq.ft.
Film studio/ office/ warehouse	West of Arabian Drive on the north side of Burnett Road	10.4	Warehouse with caretaker quarters	No activity, approval extended	3,108 sq.ft.
Rock Creek Ranch/Quad-Knopf	Steuber & Abajo	10.7	Sewage Plant	Unknown, per County	2

As discussed in Sections 5.1 through 5.17, many of the potential impacts of the Proposed Project would occur during construction, with few lasting operational effects. Because the construction-related impacts of the project would be temporary and localized, they would only have the potential to combine with similar impacts of other projects if they occur at the same time and in close proximity. No current and/or

probable projects in the vicinity of the substation have anticipated construction schedules that would occur at the same time as the Proposed Project and thus create a potential cumulative impact. The nearest known project that may overlap with the substation construction schedule would be installation of an 80-foot monopole by AT&T on Cummings Valley Road, approximately 4 miles from the substation site. Erecting a monopole is not expected to require extensive site preparation or large construction crews. It is not anticipated that the impacts from the AT&T project, should they occur coincident with the Banducci Substation project, would create cumulative significant impacts. Post-construction, long-term impacts from the Proposed Project, however, have the potential to combine with impacts from the projects listed in Table 5.18-1. These impacts are considered by issue area.

Aesthetics. With incorporation of mitigation measures, construction and operation of the Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts to visual resources. The proposed substation would be largely screened from public views by project landscaping and a wall. Installation of tubular steel poles adjacent to the substation would introduce a visible but relatively minor element into the landscape. The replacement of existing wood poles and the installation of telecommunications cables are incremental changes that would not substantially alter the existing visual character found in the area. The incremental change in visual conditions associated with the Proposed Project would contribute to a cumulative change in visual conditions, but represents only a relatively minor incremental change in cumulative conditions. Therefore, the project's visual effects are adverse, but not considerable enough to represent a significant cumulative impact.

Air Quality. Air emissions would result from both construction and operation of the substation. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-1 discussed in Section 5.3, Air Quality, would reduce air emissions of particulate matter from the project to a less than significant level. Other pollutants resulting from construction activities are accounted for in emissions inventories for regional air quality maintenance plans and would not impede attainment or maintenance of ozone or carbon monoxide (CO) standards. Any potential adverse cumulative air quality impacts would be short-term (lasting for the duration of construction) and would not be cumulatively considerable; therefore, the cumulative impact would be less than significant. Since the substation would be unmanned, there would be no vehicular emissions associated with regular commuting to and from the substation. As a result, there will be no significant cumulative impacts to Air Quality.

Biological Resources. Potential impacts to biological resources could occur from construction impacts on special-status species (particularly listed plants). The proposed substation site is bordered by agricultural lands, making it less desirable for wildlife species. Biological resources could be affected by noise, dust, ground disturbance, sedimentation, and potential spills of hazardous materials. Potential impacts from the Proposed Project would be less than significant with the implementation of APMs and mitigation measures discussed in Section 5.4. The project would not represent a significant contribution to cumulative impacts. Impacts to biological resources during operation and maintenance would be the same as those during current operation and maintenance practices; therefore, no contribution to cumulative impacts would occur.

Cultural Resources. Neither short-term construction activities nor operation and maintenance activities would affect any known cultural resources with the implementation of APMs and mitigation measures discussed in Section 5.5. These measures would require marking the limits of the project area to exclude the known resources. Workers would also be trained to identify potential cultural resources and to halt and redirect construction activities in the event that unanticipated cultural resources are discovered. No cultural resources would be affected during project construction or during operation of the project, and no contribution to cumulative impacts would occur.

Geology and Soils. The project would not increase potential risks associated with seismic events or other geologic hazards. Short-term construction impacts to soils, including unstable soils, have the potential to occur; however, implementation of the mitigation measures described in Section 5.6 would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions would result from the burning of fuel required to operate construction equipment and vehicle use during construction activities. The most common GHGs associated with fuel combustion are CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O. Greenhouse gas reduction measures would be implemented to reduce already less than significant GHG emissions. Any potential adverse cumulative GHG impacts would be short-term and not cumulatively considerable; therefore, GHG emissions would have a less than significant cumulative impact. GHG emissions from operation and maintenance would be minimal, as the substation and power lines would be unmanned and would require only infrequent maintenance. The use of sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆) in transformers would comply with CARB requirements on use and reporting. SCE would install new SF₆ breaker designs that are guaranteed to have an annual leak rate of one-half of one percent or less. The small amount of emissions created during operation and maintenance would not significantly contribute to cumulative impacts.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials. The use of hazardous materials for the project would be minimal during construction and operation. Hazardous materials would be stored and used in compliance with applicable regulations. The project would not result in an increase in usage of hazardous materials. Impacts from routine use, transportation, disposal, and accidental spillage of hazardous materials would be reduced to a less than significant level with implementation of the APM and mitigation measures discussed in Section 5.8.

Hydrology and Water Quality. The project would not substantially change drainage patterns at the site. It would require minimal water for dust control during construction and minimal use of water for irrigation of landscape vegetation during operation. With the implementation of the measures discussed in Section 5.9, the construction and operation of the substation would not adversely impact hydrology or water quality in the project area or contribute to a significant cumulative impact.

Land Use. The project would not conflict with applicable land use policies and regulations; therefore, the project would not contribute to cumulative impacts to land use.

Mineral Resources. No commercial mineral resources are known to exist within the project area and the Proposed Project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource; therefore, the project would not contribute to potential cumulative impacts that may result in the loss of mineral resources.

Noise. The Proposed Project is not expected to contribute to a long-term cumulative impact on ambient noise levels in the project area. Noise from construction activities would be audible, but most construction would be limited to daytime hours and would be short-term. Any required nighttime work would be of extremely short duration. Impacts from noise to nearby sensitive receptors would be less than significant with the implementation of APMs and Mitigation Measure N-1. No other projects in the area are expected to be under construction at the same time as the proposed project (see Table 5.19-1). As such, the project would result in a less than significant noise impact during construction and operations, and will not contribute to a significant cumulative impact.

Population and Housing. The Proposed Project would not result in impacts to population and housing. Construction workers would be existing local SCE staff or contracted workers from the region. The project would not displace any existing housing or people. The Proposed Project would have no impacts on population and housing.

Public Services. The Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts to public services. The Proposed Project would not require the cessation or interruption of fire or police protection services, schools, or other public facilities. Impacts would be less than significant and would not contribute to a cumulatively significant impact on the public services or parks in the project area.

Recreation. The Proposed Project would not cause a substantial increase in the use of or physical deterioration of parks or recreational facilities. The project would have no effects on recreation and would not contribute to cumulative effects associated with other projects.

Transportation and Traffic. Construction of the Proposed Project would have the potential for temporary impacts to traffic volumes, LOS standards, road hazards, and emergency access. Use of local roads for transport of construction equipment and construction personnel would be temporary and short-term. Power line and telecommunication cable installation would require temporary lane closures; however, these slight increases in traffic would be temporary and short-term. Given the location of the project area in relation to other development projects in the region, the transportation network is sufficient to accommodate construction traffic to avoid significant impacts to any one area. Transportation and Traffic impacts would be temporary and less than significant, and would not contribute to cumulatively considerable impacts.

Utilities and Service Systems. Implementation of other development projects could result in potential cumulative impacts to utilities, particularly local water supplies and wastewater facilities. In contrast, construction of the Proposed Project would temporarily require a minimal water supply and generate minimal amounts of wastewater. Construction would require the disposal of a less than significant amount of all types of waste. No expanded facilities or services would be needed for the project, and use and disposal of all water and waste products would comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Impacts to utilities and service systems during operation and maintenance would be the same as those during current operation and maintenance practices; therefore, no contribution to cumulative impacts would occur.

c. Does the project have environmental effects, which would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. The project would not substantially adversely affect human beings directly or indirectly. The Initial Study identified no environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings. Adverse effects would be mitigated by implementation of APMs and mitigation measures and in most instances would be related to short-term construction impacts. Nearby residents could be affected during construction by impacts related to air quality, hazardous materials, and noise. However, few residences are located near the substation site, which would be the focus of most construction activity. Installation of telecommunications cable on existing poles or in conduit would be a transitory work activity near residences. These potential impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level with the implementation of the APMs and mitigation measures included in this Initial Study.