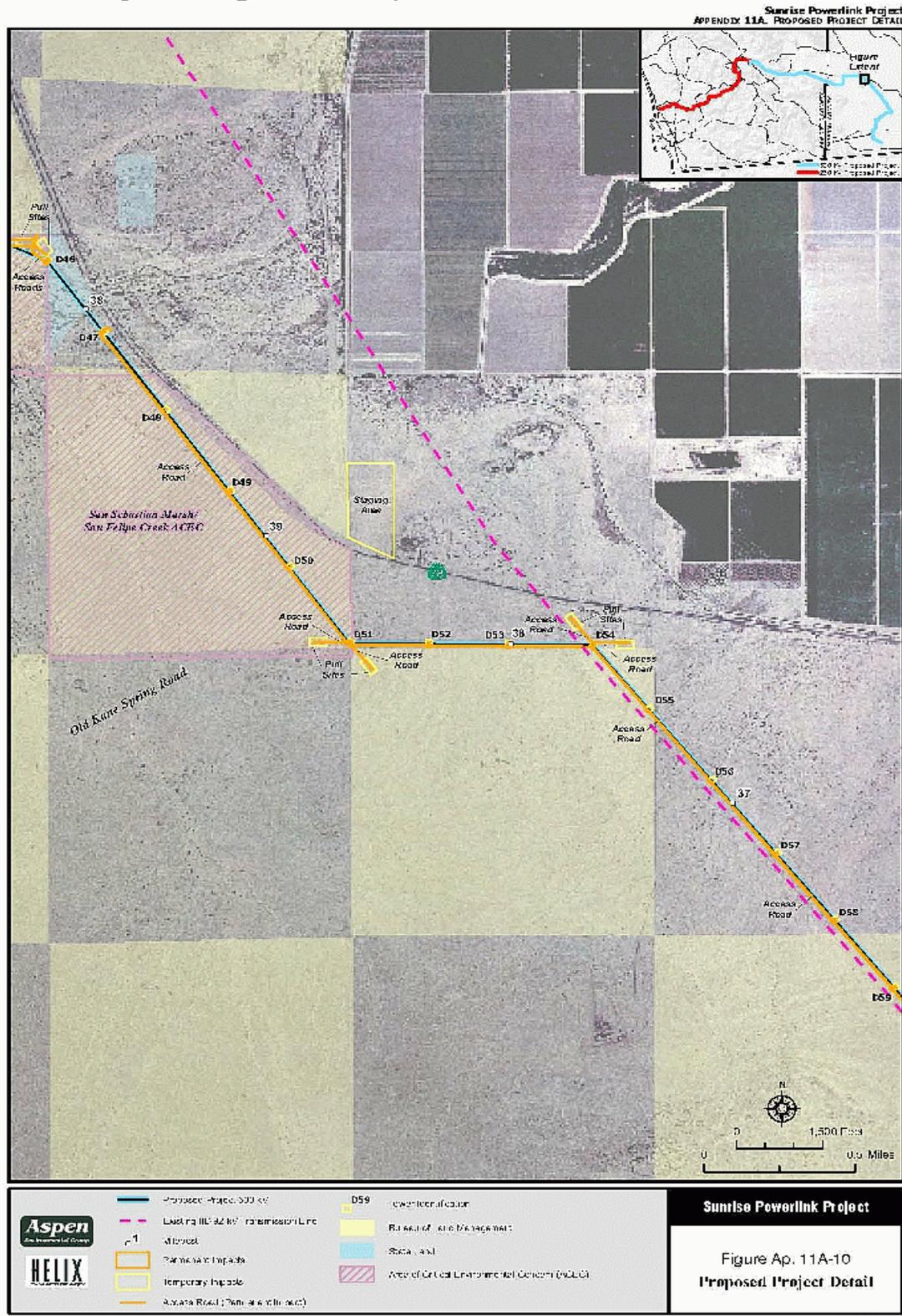
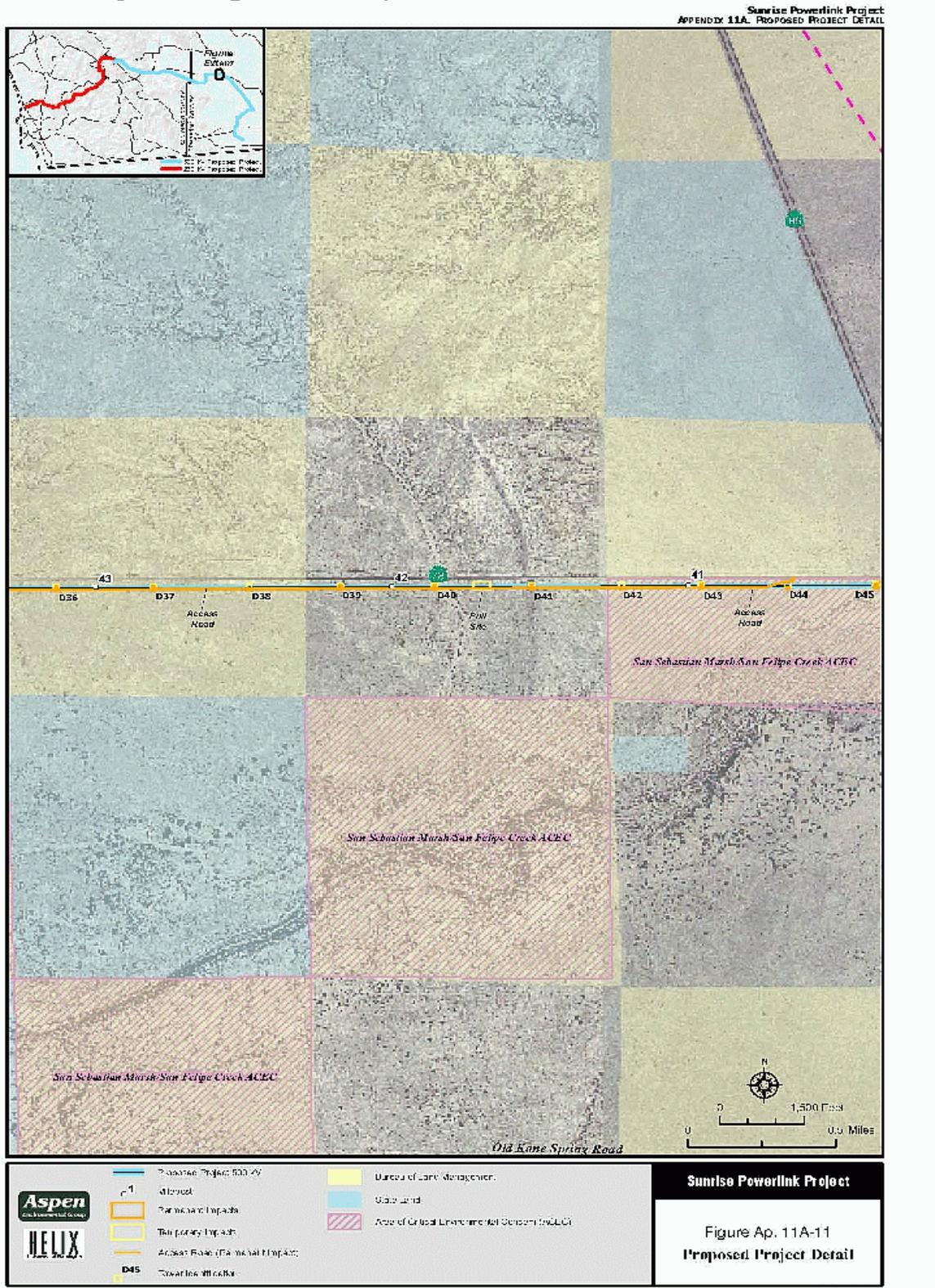


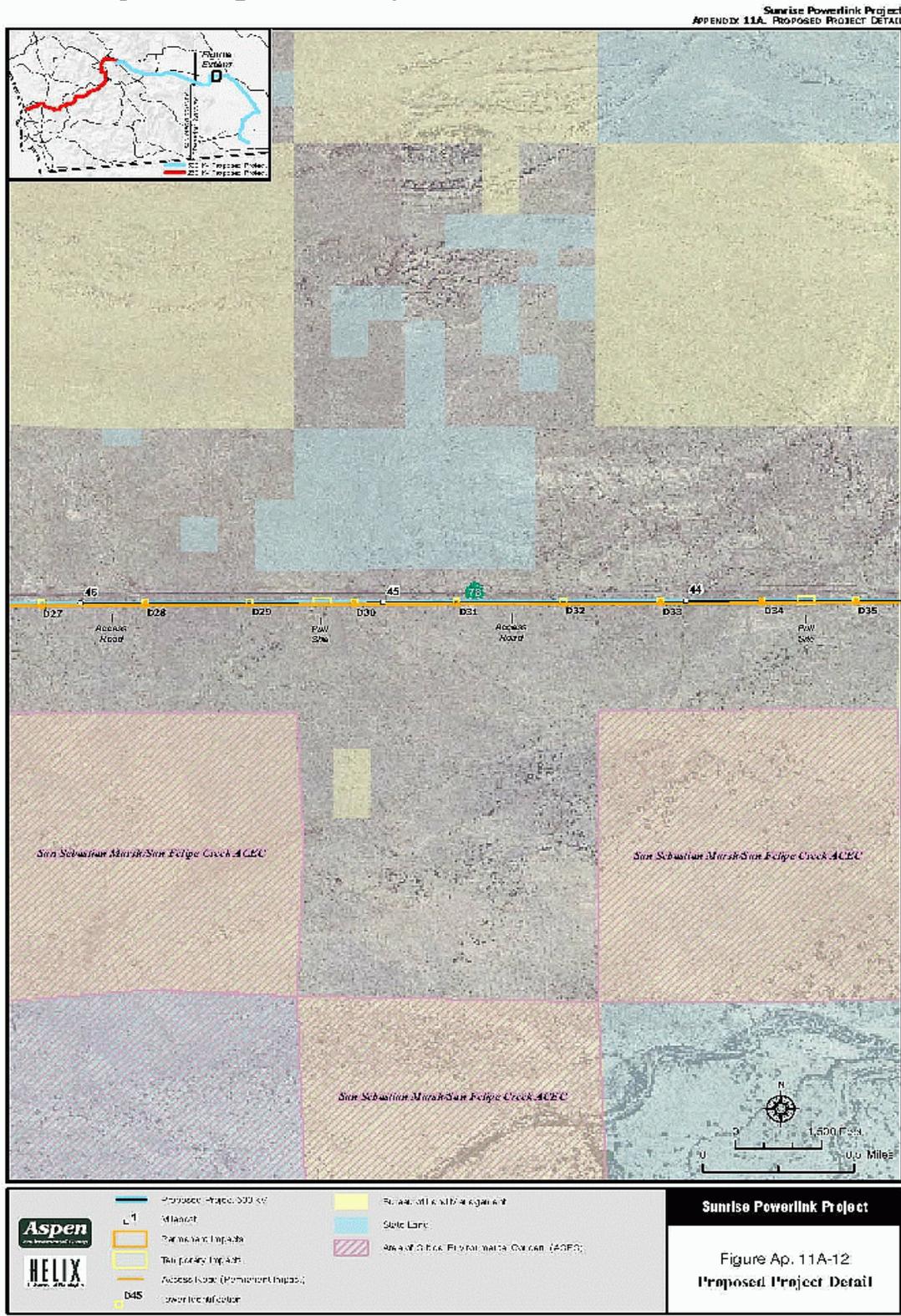
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 Imperial County Planning and Development Services ALUC



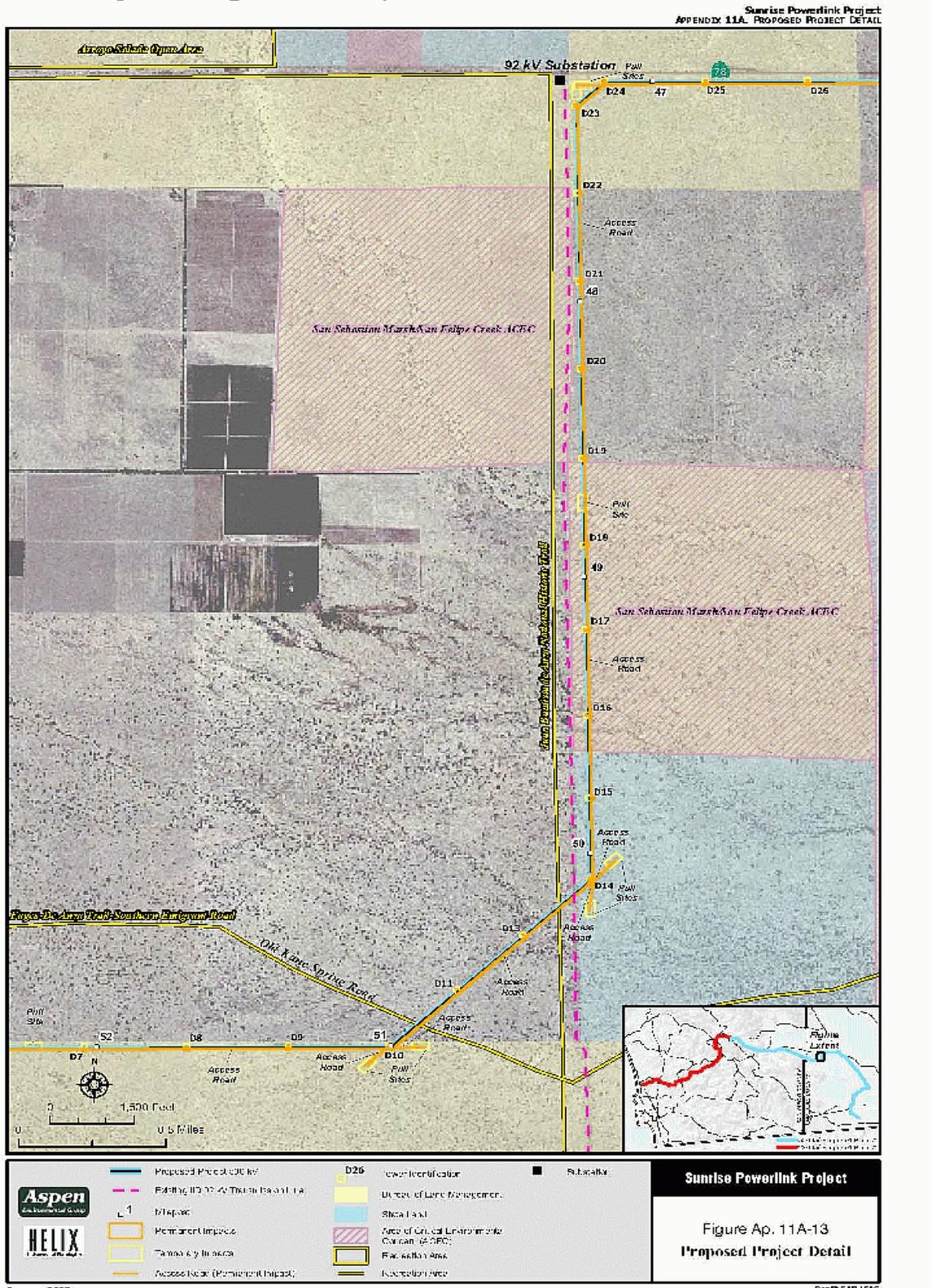
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 Imperial County Planning and Development Services ALUC



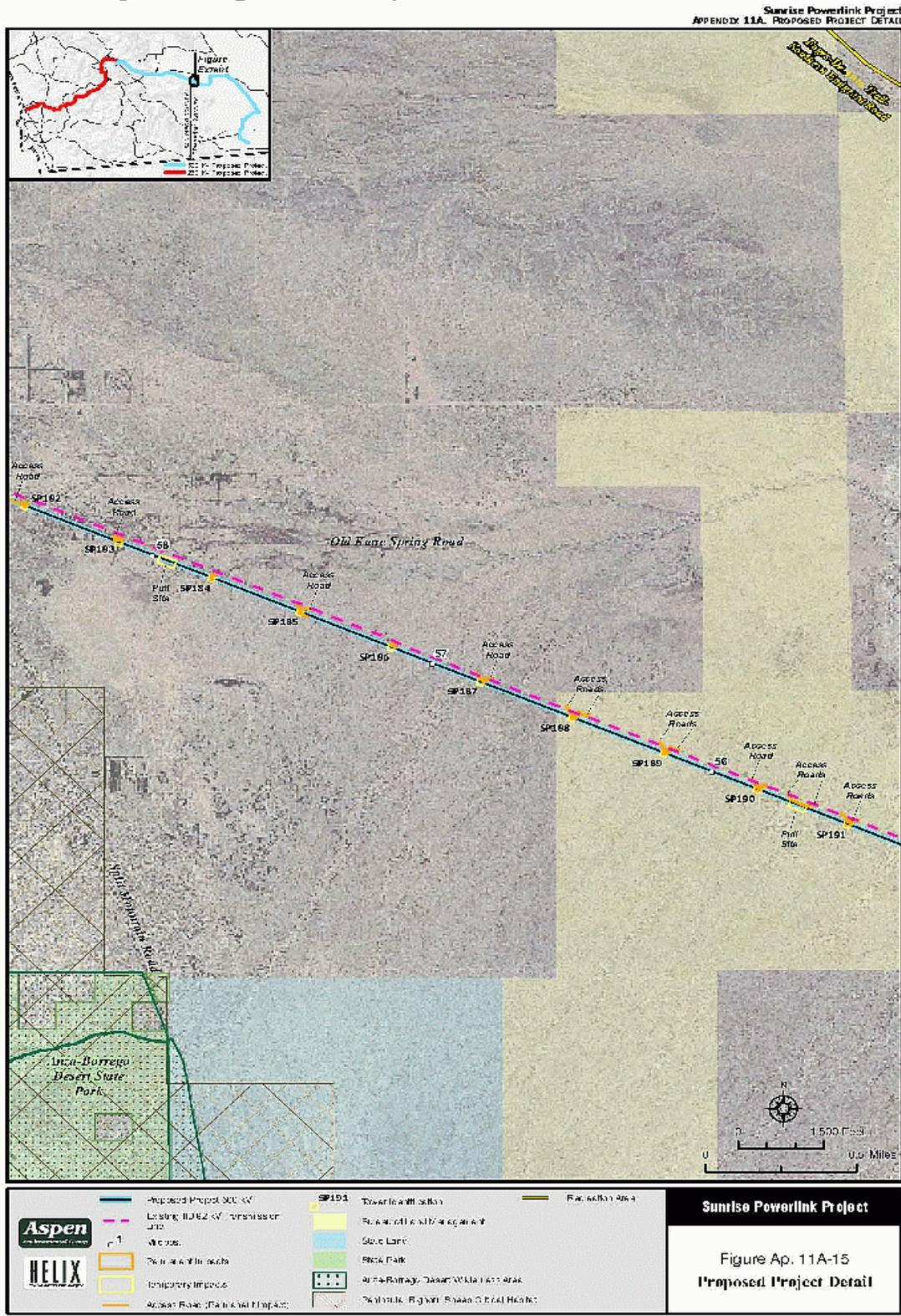
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 Imperial County Planning and Development Services ALUC



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Imperial County Planning and Development Services ALUC

Executive Summary

This EIR/EIS does not make a recommendation regarding the approval or denial of the project. It is purely informational in content, and will be used by the CPUC and BLM in considering whether to approve the Proposed Project or any of the alternatives analyzed in this EIR/EIS.

ES.1 Introduction/Background

The Sunrise Powerlink Project (SRPL) is a proposal by San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E or “the Applicant”) to construct a 150-mile transmission line from SDG&E’s Imperial Valley Substation near El Centro, Imperial County, to SDG&E’s Peñasquitos Substation near Interstate 805, in coastal San Diego (see Figure ES-1).

On November 2, 2005, San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) filed with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) a Right-of-Way (ROW) Grant application. On December 14, 2005, SDG&E submitted to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) an application (A.06-08-010) for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN), and subsequently, on August 4, 2006, submitted an amended application accompanied by its Proponent’s Environmental Assessment (PEA) for the Sunrise Powerlink (SRPL) Transmission Line Project (Proposed Project or SRPL Project). The Proposed Project primarily consists of new electric transmission lines between the Imperial Valley Substation and the western portion of SDG&E’s service area in San Diego and a new substation in central San Diego County, along with other system upgrades and modifications.

This Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIR/EIS) has been prepared jointly by two agencies, the CPUC as Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the U.S. Department of the Interior, BLM as federal Lead Agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The EIR/EIS provides information about the environmental setting and impacts of the Proposed Project and alternatives. It informs the public about the project and its impacts, and provides information to meet the needs of local, State, and federal permitting agencies required to consider the project proposed by SDG&E. The EIR/EIS will be used by the CPUC in conducting the proceeding to determine whether to grant SDG&E’s requested CPCN for the project and by the BLM to determine whether to grant SDG&E a ROW Grant on BLM-administered land in its Record of Decision.

The Draft EIR/EIS takes into account and reflects comments, information, and points of concern offered by government officials and agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and members of the public. This input was gathered during an extensive public involvement and outreach process that is detailed in Section ES.4.

This EIR/EIS presents an evaluation of the environmental impacts that would result from construction and operation of SDG&E’s proposed Sunrise Powerlink Project. It presents recommended mitigation measures that, if adopted, would avoid or minimize many of the significant environmental impacts identified. In accordance with CEQA and NEPA requirements, this EIR/EIS also identifies alternatives to the Proposed Project (including the No Project Alternative). These are alternatives that could avoid or minimize significant environmental impacts associated with the project as proposed by SDG&E, while meeting most if not all of SDG&E’s objectives.

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Sunrise Powerlink Project EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ES.2 Summary of Draft EIR/EIS Conclusions: Environmentally Superior Alternative

This EIR/EIS analyzes the environmental impacts of SDG&E's Proposed Project as well as alternatives that were developed as a result of public and agency input during the scoping process. The EIR/EIS presents an analysis for the Proposed Project and 27 alternatives to the Proposed Project. As documented in detail in the Alternatives Screening Report (see Appendix 1 to the Draft EIR/EIS), 70 additional alternatives were also considered but eliminated from detailed consideration.

The CEQA/NEPA criteria used to determine whether to include alternatives for analysis in the EIR/EIS was based on the following three factors: (1) meeting most project objectives; (2) reducing significant effects of the Proposed Project; and (3) being feasible in terms of possible legal, regulatory or technical constraints. After an alternative was retained for analysis, the process used for comparison of alternatives was based solely on the environmental impacts of each alternative as defined in the EIR/EIS. The ranking of alternatives did not re-consider the extent to which each alternative met the original screening criteria.

The CPUC has identified the Environmentally Superior Alternative, as required by CEQA Guidelines 15126.6(e)2. In accordance with BLM planning regulations, BLM's Agency Preferred Alternative will be identified in the Final EIS (BLM Manual 1790-1, Ch. V(B)(4)(e)). The BLM will select a preferred alternative following analysis of public comments on the Draft EIS/EIR and further internal review of the Draft EIR/EIS. NEPA guidance states that the environmentally preferable alternative is the one that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment, and best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural and natural resources (NEPA's 40 Most Asked Questions, 6a).

The results of the comparisons of transmission and generation alternatives are presented below. The overall Environmentally Superior Alternative is listed first and the lowest ranked alternative is listed eighth. Additional detail on these conclusions and how they were reached is presented in Section ES.6 of this Executive Summary and Section H of the EIR/EIS. The ranking is based only on the level of environmental effects as determined in the EIR/EIS analysis. Note that while the numbers of significant, unmitigable impacts presented for each alternative below are informative, they do not explain the relative extent and scale of impacts so they cannot be used alone to compare alternatives. The highest ranked transmission alternative that provides direct access to renewable resources in the Imperial Valley is the southern route identified as the "Interstate 8 Alternative with Modified Route D Alternative," which avoids Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

Overall Environmentally Superior Alternative

1. New In-Area All-Source Generation Alternative

Description: One baseload and four peaking gas-fired power plants (700 MW) plus San Diego County renewable generation (300 MW of wind, solar photovoltaics, biomass/biogas; see Figure ES-2).

Rationale for Ranking: Has 35 significant, unmitigable impacts but gas-fired generation would be concentrated at already disturbed sites; only 11 miles of new transmission line. No effects on state parks or National Forest System lands. With smaller renewable components (with 150 acres of permanent habitat loss), ground disturbance and significant impacts to recreation areas and visual resources are reduced in comparison to the New In-Area Renewable Generation Alternative.