

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
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SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



DRAFT

Mitigated Negative Declaration

San Diego Gas and Electric's Vine 69/12-kV Substation Project Application No. A.14-05-021

A.1 Introduction

Pursuant to California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) General Order 131-D, San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) has filed an application (A.14-05-021) with the CPUC for a Permit to Construct a new 69/12 kV substation: Vine Substation Project ("Proposed Project"). The application was filed on May 27, 2014 and includes the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA), prepared by SDG&E pursuant to the CPUC's Rules of Practice and Procedure Rule 2.4 (California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Compliance). The Proposed Project includes construction of a new 69/12-kV substation, relocation of nine existing 12-kV distribution circuits, the looping in of an existing 69-kV power line to the Vine Substation, and the extension of an existing telecommunication system.

The new Vine Substation is planned to occupy an area approximately 1.3 acres (approximately 305 feet by 180 feet) within a 1.5-acre parcel, which would be enclosed by an approximately 10-foot-tall concrete masonry wall around the perimeter of the substation. The electrical facilities to be installed include 69/12-kV air-insulated electrical buses, steel support structures, transformers, capacitors, reactors, circuit breakers, disconnect switches, communication equipment, control equipment, and protective relays.

The Proposed Project has been stated by SDG&E to be necessary to maintain existing substation and distribution system reliability standards; provide substation and circuit tie capacity that will provide additional reliability for existing and future system needs; and meet the area's long-term electric distribution capacity needs by constructing a substation near planned load growth.

SDG&E anticipates that Proposed Project construction would take approximately 19 months. Construction would commence following CPUC approval, final engineering, and procurement activities. In order to meet the July 2017 operating date, construction is anticipated to start in January 2016 and would last through July 2017, including testing, commissioning, and energization. In accordance with the CPUC's General Order 131-D, approval of this project must comply with CEQA.

Pursuant to CEQA, the CPUC must prepare an Initial Study for the Proposed Project to determine if any significant adverse effects on the environment would result from project implementation. The IS utilizes the significance criteria outlined in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. If the Initial Study for the

project indicates that a significant adverse impact could occur, the CPUC would be required to prepare an Environmental Impact Report.

According to Article 6 (Negative Declaration Process) and Section 15070 (Decision to Prepare a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration) of the State CEQA Guidelines, a public agency shall prepare or have prepared a proposed negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration for a project subject to CEQA when:

- (a) *The initial study shows that there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project may have a significant effect on the environment, or*
- (b) *The initial study identifies potentially significant effects, but:*
 - (1) *Revisions in the project plans or proposals made by, or agreed to by the applicant before a proposed mitigated negative declaration and initial study are released for public review would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur, and*
 - (2) *There is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project as revised may have a significant effect on the environment.*

Based on the analysis in the Initial Study, it has been determined that all Project-related environmental impacts could be reduced to a less-than-significant level with the incorporation of feasible mitigation measures. Therefore, adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) will satisfy the requirements of CEQA. The mitigation measures included in this MND are designed to reduce or eliminate the potentially significant environmental impacts described in the Initial Study. Where a measure described in this document has been previously incorporated into the Project, either as a specific Project design feature or as an Applicant-Proposed Measure (APM), this is noted in the discussion. Mitigation measures are structured in accordance with the criteria in Section 15370 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

A.2 Project Description

The Proposed Project would include the following major components:

- Construct a new 69/12-kV Vine Substation at the southwestern corner of the intersection of Vine Street and Kettner Boulevard, just west of Interstate 5 (I-5).
- Relocate approximately nine existing 12-kV distribution circuits utilizing a combination of existing and new underground distribution conduits. The relocated distribution circuits would generally be placed within the franchise portion of City of San Diego public streets (public right-of-way [ROW]) in the Project area, including Columbia Street, India Street, Kettner Boulevard, Pacific Highway, Sassafras Street, State Street, Vine Street, West Laurel Street, West Hawthorn Street, West Palm Street, and West Redwood Street.
- Loop in an existing 69-kV power line (TL604) to the proposed Vine Substation, which includes removing two existing wood poles near the corner of California Street and Vine Street and installing three new self-supported tubular steel poles (TSPs) adjacent to the eastern lane of Pacific Highway.
- To connect the proposed Vine Substation and Kettner Substation to SDG&E's telecommunication system, additional fiber optic cable would be installed generally within the underground 12-kV distribution duct banks (approximately 2,850 feet), with an overhead connection of fiber optic cable (100 feet) into the proposed Vine Substation.

For a complete, detailed description of the Proposed Project, including construction activities please see Section B, Project Description.

A.3 Alternatives

The purpose of an alternatives analysis pursuant to CEQA is to identify options that would feasibly attain the project's objectives while reducing the significant environmental impacts resulting from the Proposed Project. CEQA does not require the inclusion of an alternatives analysis in MNDs because the Initial Study concludes that, with incorporation of mitigation measures, there would be no significant adverse impacts resulting from the Proposed Project. Therefore, no alternatives analysis needs to be provided in the Initial Study. However, pursuant to Section IX.B.1.c of CPUC General Order 131-D, SDG&E's application did consider five system alternatives. The application generally discussed advantages and disadvantages of different options, and includes a brief description of the criteria for choosing the substation site identified in the PEA.

A.4 Environmental Determination

The Initial Study was prepared to identify the potential environmental effects resulting from Proposed Project implementation, and to evaluate the level of significance of these effects. The Initial Study relies on information in SDG&E's PEA filed May 27, 2014 and Supplemental PEA filed February 25, 2015 (referred to herein as PEA), SDG&E's responses to data requests, Project site reconnaissance by the CPUC environmental team in February 2015, and other environmental analyses.

SDG&E's PEA identified measures to address potentially significant impacts — the Applicant-Proposed Measures (APMs) — and these APMs are considered to be part of the description of the Proposed Project. Based on the Initial Study analysis, additional mitigation measures are identified for adoption to ensure that impacts of the Proposed Project would be less than significant. The additional mitigation measures either supplement, or supersede the APMs. SDG&E has agreed to implement all of the additional recommended mitigation measures as part of the Proposed Project.

Implementation of the following mitigation measures would avoid potentially significant impacts identified in the Initial Study or reduce them to less-than-significant levels.

Mitigation Measures for Construction-Phase Air Quality

AQ-1 Control Off-road Equipment Emissions. Off-road equipment with engines larger than 50 horsepower shall have engines that meet or exceed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency/California Air Resources Board Tier 3 Emissions Standards. Exceptions will be allowed only on a case-by-case basis for two specific situations: (1) an off-road equipment item that is a specialty, or unique, piece of equipment that cannot be found with a Tier 3 or better engine after a due diligence search; and/or (2) an off-road equipment item that will be used for a total of no more than 10 days. Additionally, off-road equipment engine idling shall not exceed five (5) minutes unless required for proper operation and all engines shall be maintained in good operating condition and in tune per manufacturers' specification.

AQ-2 Control On-road Equipment Emissions. All construction on-road vehicle engines, with the exception of personal vehicles, shall be turned off when not in use. Engine idling shall not exceed five (5) minutes unless required for proper operation or personnel health and safety (e.g., shelter from the elements). All construction on-road vehicle

engines, with the exception of personal vehicles, shall be maintained in good operating condition and in tune per manufacturers' specification.

AQ-3

Implement Fugitive Dust Control Plan for the Vine Substation. The Applicant shall develop a Fugitive Dust Control Plan to reduce Particulate Matter (PM) 10 and PM2.5 emissions during construction of the Vine Substation. The implementation of this Plan shall be considered complete when the Vine Substation's final surfacing, as required in part c.viii below, is done. The Fugitive Dust Control Plan shall include:

- a. Name(s), address(es), and phone number(s) of person(s) responsible for the preparation, submission, and implementation of the Plan;
- b. Listing of all fugitive dust emissions sources included in the construction of the substation.
- c. The following on-site dust control measures, and any other proposed control measures, that will be implemented:
 - i. All on-site unpaved areas used by on-road vehicles shall be watered or stabilized with an Air Resources Board-certified soil stabilizer at a sufficient frequency such that no visible dust emissions occur when on-road vehicles traverse unpaved areas on the substation site.
 - ii. All material excavated or graded shall be sufficiently watered to prevent excessive dust. Watering will occur as needed with complete coverage of disturbed areas. Excavated soil piles shall be watered as needed and in compliance with San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) Rule 55 requirements for the duration of construction or covered with temporary coverings.
 - iii. Construction activities, but not dust control activities, which occur on unpaved surfaces shall be discontinued during windy conditions when those activities cause visible dust plumes that extend beyond the substation fence line, or in violation with SDAPCD Rule 55 requirements.
 - iv. Track-out shall be removed at the conclusion of each workday.
 - v. Shaker plates and gravel beds, or equivalently or more effective track-out control, shall be used and maintained throughout the construction period until the site is paved to remove bulk material from tires and vehicle undercarriages before vehicles exit the Vine Substation property.
 - vi. All haul trucks hauling soil, sand, and other loose materials shall be covered (e.g., with tarps or other enclosures that would reduce fugitive dust emissions) or watered, and shall maintain at least two feet of freeboard to reduce spillage from the haul truck.
 - vii. Traffic speeds for on-road vehicles and off-road equipment on unpaved areas/temporary roads shall be limited to 15 miles per hour.
 - viii. The substation's interior asphalt access road shall be paved as soon as practical during construction. The remaining surface of the substation site shall consist of concrete pads or be graveled, so that there are no open soil areas other than

those that are within any vegetated professionally landscaped areas of the site. Concrete and gravel surfaces shall be completed as soon as practical during construction.

- ix. Other fugitive dust control measures as necessary to comply with SDAPCD Rule 55 requirements.

Mitigation Measure for Paleontological Resources

- C-1 Paleontological Resource Mitigation Plan.** A Paleontological Resource Mitigation Plan (PRMP) shall be prepared by a Qualified Paleontologist in accordance with SVP Guidelines (2010). The PRMP shall identify construction impact areas with the potential of encountering significant resources and the approximate depths at which those resources are likely to be encountered. The PRMP shall outline a coordination strategy to ensure that one or more qualified paleontological monitors will conduct full-time monitoring of all ground disturbance in sediments determined to have a high to moderate sensitivity (i.e., the Bay Point Formation, and the underlying Lindavista and San Diego Formations, if encountered). The PRMP shall detail the significance criteria to be used to determine which resources will be avoided or recovered for their data potential. The PRMP shall also detail methods of recovery, preparation and analysis of specimens, final curation of specimens at an accredited repository, data analysis, and reporting. The PRMP shall be submitted to the CPUC for review and approval at least 30 days before the start of construction.
- C-2 Train Construction Personnel.** Prior to the start of construction, all field personnel shall receive a worker's environmental awareness training module on paleontological resources. The training shall provide a description of the fossil resources that may be encountered in the Project area, outline steps to follow in the event that a fossil discovery is made, and provide contact information for the Qualified Paleontologist and onsite monitor(s). The training shall be developed by the Qualified Paleontologist and may be conducted concurrent with other environmental training (e.g., cultural and natural resources awareness training, safety training, etc.). The training may also be videotaped or presented in an informational brochure for future use by field personnel not present at the start of the Project.
- C-3 Monitor Construction for Paleontological Resources.** Consistent with Mitigation Measure C-1 (*Paleontological Resource Mitigation Plan*), full-time construction monitoring shall be conducted by the qualified paleontological monitor(s) within previously undisturbed sediments in areas determined to have high to moderate sensitivity (i.e., the Bay Point Formation, and the underlying Lindavista and San Diego Formations, if encountered). Monitoring shall entail the visual inspection of excavated or graded areas and trench sidewalls. The monitor may also screen sediments to check for the presence of microvertebrates, if they are believed to be present. In the event that a paleontological resource is discovered, the monitor shall have the authority to temporarily divert the construction equipment around the find until it is assessed for scientific significance, and collected.

Mitigation Measure for Human Remains

- C-4 Treatment of Human Remains.** If human remains are unearthed during construction activities, construction work in the immediate area of the discovery shall be halted and directed away from the discovery until the county coroner can determine whether the remains are those of a Native American. If they are those of a Native American, the following would apply:
- a. The coroner shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission.
 - b. If discovered human remains are determined to be Native American remains, and are released by the coroner, these remains shall be left in situ and covered by fabric or other temporary barriers.
 - c. The human remains shall be protected until SDG&E and the Most Likely Descendant, as designated by the Native American Heritage Commission, come to a decision on the final disposition of the remains.

According to the California Health and Safety Code, six or more human burials at one location constitute a cemetery (Section 8100), and willful disturbance of human remains is a felony (Section 7052).

Mitigation Measure for Emergency Response

- T-1 Construction Traffic Control Plan** (presented below under “Mitigation Measures for Construction Traffic”)

Mitigation Measure for Construction Noise

- N-1 Municipal Code Non-Compliance Approval or Prepare Construction Noise Control Plan.** Prior to a Notice to Proceed, SDG&E shall complete one of the following (a) or (b):
- (a)** Obtain written authorization(s) from the City of San Diego allowing construction of the Project to exceed the noise performance standards identified in Municipal Code Chapter 5, Article 9.5, Division 4, Section 59.5.0404(b). Official copies of the written authorization(s) shall be submitted to the CPUC.
 - (b)** Prepare a detailed Construction Noise Control Plan (Plan) for review by the CPUC and City of San Diego. The Plan is intended to minimize noise from construction activities to the maximum extent feasible at work areas within 130 feet of residences. The Plan must include, but not be limited to:
 - Methods to reduce mobile and stationary construction noise levels, to the maximum extent feasible, occurring within 200 feet of sensitive receptors (i.e., residences) or expected to exceed 75 dBA during the 12-hour period from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
 - Methods to reduce mobile and stationary construction noise levels, to the maximum extent feasible, occurring outside the 12-hour period from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. assuming the requirements of Mitigation Measure N-2 are met. Any conditions or performance standards required by the City of San Diego or CPUC through the implementation of Mitigation Measure N-2 shall be met.
 - Identification of heavy truck trip routes accessing the Vine Substation site, construction staging yards, 12-kV distribution circuits, and telecommunication routes

to reduce travel on residential streets and avoid noise sensitive receptors to the maximum extent feasible.

- The Plan shall detail how SDG&E and its contractor(s) will respond to noise complaints, and how to document the resolution of those complaints.

In addition to completing either (a) or (b) above, SDG&E shall:

- Establish a telephone number for use by the public to report any nuisance noise conditions associated with construction activities. SDG&E shall ensure that a public liaison is assigned to respond to all public construction complaints in a timely manner, and either (a) the telephone number is staffed by the noise and vibration liaison during construction hours; or (b) the phone number is connected to an automatic answering feature, with date and time stamp recording, to answer calls when the phone is unattended. Public complaints shall be forwarded to the CPUC within 48 hours. This telephone number shall be posted at entrances to work areas and construction yards in a manner visible to passersby.
- SDG&E and its contractor(s) shall respond to public complaints and document the resolution of those complaints.
- Methods for conflict resolution shall be documented in the event a noise complaint cannot be resolved.
- A log of all complaints and the current status shall be provided to the CPUC monthly.

N-2 Construction Work Hours Authorization. Construction activities shall not occur during the following hours and days without obtaining all necessary authorization(s) from the City of San Diego allowing for construction to occur outside the hours allowable within Municipal Code Chapter 5, Article 9.5, Division 4, Section 59.5.0404(a). SDG&E shall provide copies of City authorizations to the CPUC for review.

- Between the hours of 7:00 p.m. of any day and 7:00 a.m. of the following day, on legal holidays as specified in Section 21.04 of the City of San Diego Municipal Code, or on Sundays.

Mitigation Measure for Construction Traffic

T-1 Construction Traffic Control Plan. Prior to the start of construction, SDG&E shall prepare and submit a Construction Traffic Control Plan for review and/or approval to the CPUC and all agencies with jurisdiction over public roads and transportation facilities that would be directly affected by the construction activities and/or would require permits and approvals. The Construction Traffic Control Plan shall include, but not be limited to:

- The locations and use of flaggers, warning signs, lights, barricades, delineators, cones, arrow boards, etc. according to standard guidelines outlined in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, the Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction, and/or the California Joint Utility Traffic Control Manual.
- Additional methods to reduce temporary traffic delays to the maximum extent feasible.

- Defining methods to coordinate with all agencies responsible for encroachment permits throughout construction to minimize cumulative lane disruption impacts should simultaneous construction projects affect shared segments/portions of the circulation system.
- Prior to the start of construction, provide (or identify the timing to provide) copies of all approved permits and agreements to the CPUC and methods to comply with all specified requirements, including but not limited to:
 - Public Right-of-Way Permit from the City of San Diego.
 - Right-of-Entry Permit(s) from the North County Transit District (NCTD) and San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS).
 - License Agreement from the MTS.
 - Temporary Occupancy Agreement and a Utility Agreement License from Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway.
- Plans to coordinate in advance with emergency service providers to avoid restricting the movements of emergency vehicles. Police departments and fire departments shall be notified in advance by SDG&E of the proposed locations, nature, timing, and duration of any roadway disruptions, and shall be advised of any access restrictions that could impact their effectiveness. At locations where roads will be blocked, provisions shall be ready at all times to accommodate emergency vehicles, such as immediately stopping work for emergency vehicle passage, providing short detours, and developing alternate routes in conjunction with the public agencies. Documentation of the coordination with police and fire departments shall be provided to the CPUC prior to the start of construction.
- Provisions for ensuring detours or safe movement through all affected pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- Plans to coordinate with affected bus transit agencies (where applicable) at least one month prior to construction to minimize the impacts associated with the interruption of bus transit service. Documentation of the coordination with bus transit companies shall be provided to the CPUC prior to the start of construction.

A Mitigation Monitoring Plan located in Section C of this document has been prepared to ensure that the APMs and the mitigation measures presented above are properly implemented. The plan describes specific actions required to implement each measure, including information on timing of implementation and monitoring requirements.

Based on the analysis and conclusions of the Initial Study, the impacts of the Project as proposed by SDG&E would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels with the implementation of the APMs and mitigation measures presented herein, which have been incorporated into the Proposed Project.