

5.1 Aesthetics

This section describes the visual resources in the vicinity of the Proposed Project and alternatives, and the associated regulatory framework. The impact analysis presents the significance criteria used to evaluate impacts on identified resources as a consequence of implementing the Proposed Project or alternatives, the methods used in evaluating these impacts, and the results of the impact assessment based on the applied significance criteria.

5.1.1 Setting

The study area for visual resources encompasses the landscapes directly affected by facilities proposed under the Proposed Project and alternatives and the surrounding areas that would be within view of the Proposed Project components. The visual analysis focuses on travel route views, and parks and recreational views.

Definitions Related to Visual Resources

Visual or aesthetic resources are generally defined as both the natural and built features of the landscape that contribute to the public's experience and appreciation of the environment. Depending on the extent to which a project's presence would alter the perceived visual character and quality of the environment, a visual or aesthetic impact may occur.

This analysis of potential visual effects is based on review of a variety of data, including Proposed Project maps and drawings, aerial and ground level photographs of the Proposed Project area, a site visit to the Proposed Project area, and other data in the record, including local planning documents.

Project Viewshed is defined as the general area from which the Proposed Project would be visible or can be seen by the public.

Visual Quality is defined as the overall visual impression or attractiveness of an area as determined by the particular landscape characteristics, including landforms, rock forms, water features, and vegetation patterns. The attributes of variety, vividness, coherence, uniqueness, harmony and pattern contribute to the overall visual quality of an area. For the purposes of this EIR, visual quality is defined according to three levels:

- Indistinctive, or industrial – defined as generally lacking in natural or cultural visual resource amenities typical of the region;
- Representative – defined as visual resources typical or characteristic of the region's natural and/or cultural visual amenities; and
- Distinctive – defined as visual resources that are unique or exemplary of the region's natural or cultural scenic amenities.

Viewer Types and Volumes of use pertain to the types and amounts of use that various land uses receive. Land uses that derive value from the quality of their settings are considered potentially

sensitive to changes in visual setting conditions. Land uses within the study area that may be sensitive to change in visual conditions include major transportation systems such as designated scenic highways, designated scenic roads, and designated park, recreation, and natural areas.

Viewer Exposure addresses the variables that affect viewing conditions from potentially sensitive areas. Viewer exposure considers the following factors:

- landscape visibility (the ability to see the landscape);
- viewing distance (i.e., the proximity of viewers to the Proposed Project) - viewing distances are described according to whether the Proposed Project activities would be viewed within a foreground (within 0.5 mile), middleground (0.5 mile to 5 miles), or background (beyond 5 miles) zone;
- viewing angle – whether the Proposed Project would be viewed from above (superior), below (inferior), or from a level (normal) line of sight;
- extent of visibility – whether the line of sight is open and panoramic to the Proposed Project area or restricted by terrain, vegetation, and/or structures; and
- duration of view.

Visual Sensitivity is the overall measure of an existing landscape’s susceptibility to adverse visual changes. This analysis of visual sensitivity is based on the combined factors of visual quality, viewer types and volumes, and visual exposure to the Proposed Project and alternatives. Visual sensitivity is reflected according to high, moderate, and low visual sensitivity ranges, and is a composite measurement of the overall susceptibility of an area or viewer group to adverse visual or aesthetic impacts.

Existing Visual Quality of the Region

The South Coast bioregion, which includes Ventura County and the Proposed Project area, is bounded on the north by the southern end of the Los Padres National Forest, extending approximately 200 miles south to Mexico, east to the Mojave Desert, and west to the Pacific Ocean. Ventura County is densely populated along the coast in the area of the City of Ventura, with suburban and rural residential communities alongside agricultural uses in the valleys, surrounded by forested mountains and grassy rolling hills (CRA, 2014). The visual character of eastern Ventura County is characterized by features typical of the South Coast bioregion including: agricultural lands, rolling hills, canyons, orchards, mixed hardwood forests, sage scrub, chaparral, and grassland intermixed with suburban and rural communities.

The study area is typically semi-urban to rural in character. In the vicinity of the Proposed Project are developed areas including the City of Moorpark in the northern portion of the study area, and the City of Thousand Oaks in the southern portion. Topography in the area is varied, and the landscape is largely characterized by wide valleys bound by rolling hills and mountains. Existing subtransmission and transmission lines, as well as other existing utility structures, are established features within the study area’s landscape setting. The agricultural landscape is dominated by crops (primarily citrus, avocados, vegetables, and nursery stock) and other ancillary facilities

including outbuildings, tractors, and irrigation and drainage facilities (Ventura County, 2013). U.S. Route 101, State Route (SR) 118, and Santa Rosa Road run in an east-west orientation, providing major connections between coastal Ventura County and Los Angeles County. SR 23 is the major north-south roadway in the area.

This chapter presents a series of context photographs taken from representative public vantage points in the vicinity of the Proposed Project and alternatives that portray the existing visual character of the area. **Figure 5.1-1**, *Viewpoint Locations and Key Observation Points*, is a viewpoint map that depicts, by photograph numbers, the location and directions from which context photographs were taken. **Figures 5.1-2** through **5.1-4**, *Context Photographs*, present the context photos. The photographs were assigned numbers by order of mention in the following subsections, which describe the existing visual character of the study area by component. The photographs depicting viewsheds are limited in the sense that they provide only several fixed viewpoints and cannot demonstrate all views of or from the Proposed Project sites or along the Proposed Project site's perimeter.

Moorpark Substation and Segment 1

The Proposed Project's Segment 1 would be located entirely within the Moorpark Substation, on the eastern edge of the City of Moorpark. Undeveloped land lies to the north and west, light industrial development lies to the east, and a residential development is located to the south. The visual character of the Moorpark Substation area and Segment 1 is dominated by Southern California Edison (SCE) transmission and substation facilities. The substation facility includes utility infrastructure typical of a 220/66/16 kilovolt (kV) substation, all located within a fenced area. Viewers in this area include motorists on SR 118, which runs adjacent to the substation to the south, and a small number of residents south of SR 118. Views from the surrounding residential area, light industrial area, and SR 118 are generally limited due to screening of the site by surrounding trees on the western, southern, and eastern borders of the substation.

Segment 2

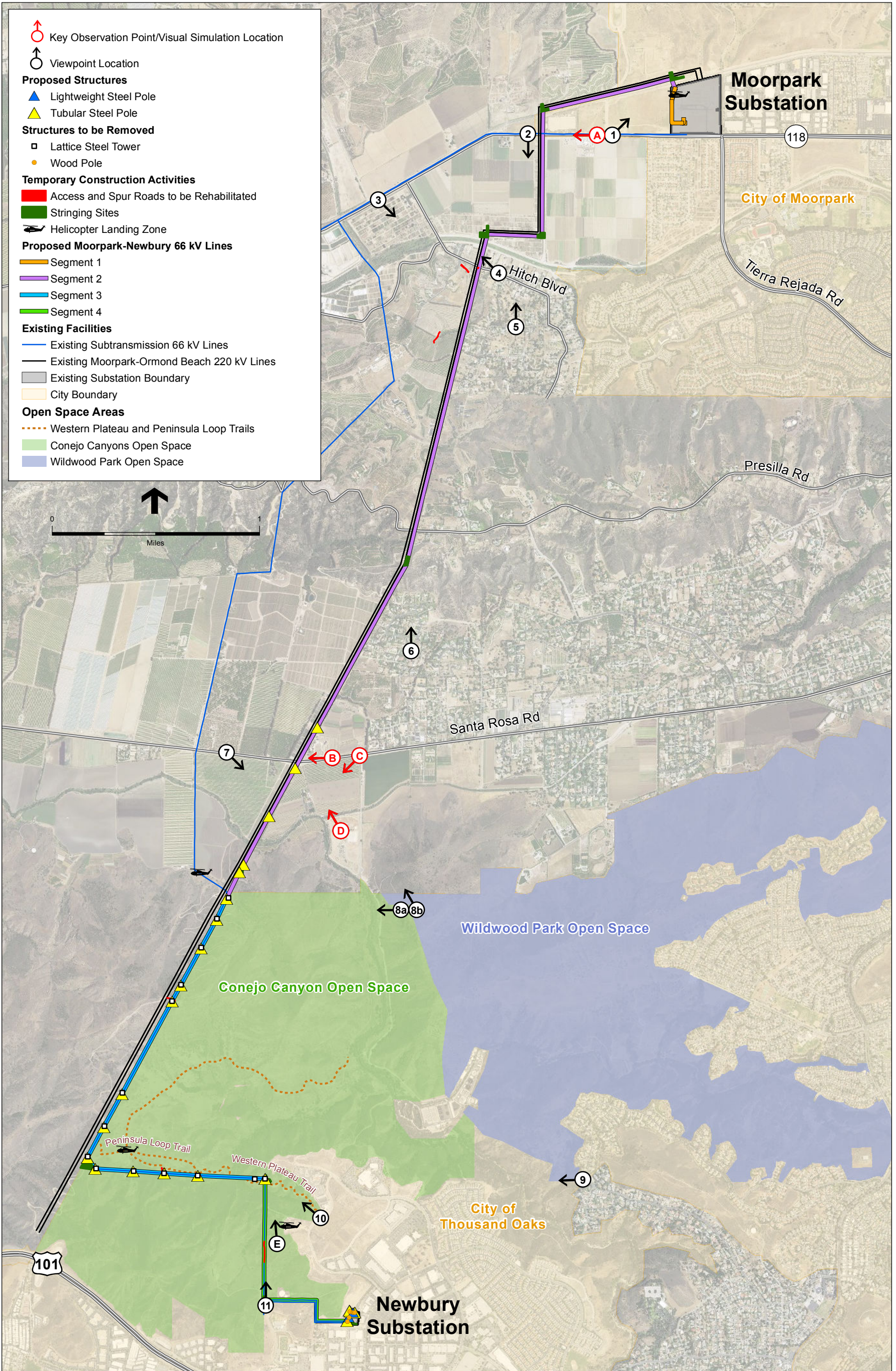
Segment 2 begins at the western fence line of the Moorpark Substation and terminates near the northern boundary of the City of Thousand Oaks. Segment 2 is located entirely within SCE's existing Moorpark-Ormond Beach 220 kV right-of-way (ROW). From the northwest corner of Moorpark Substation, the proposed 66 kV subtransmission line would exit the substation, proceed southwest across open space and agricultural land for approximately 0.6 mile within the City of Moorpark, and then would turn south near Montair Drive. The route would cross SR 118 and continue south and west across unincorporated Ventura County, traversing agricultural land, open space, Arroyo Simi, and Santa Rosa Road. In this area, SR 118 and Santa Rosa Road are two-lane highways.

The visual character of the landscape along Segment 2 includes a mixture of agricultural, industrial, suburban residential, and open space. Existing utility structures (i.e., subtransmission, transmission, distribution, and communication) along and in the vicinity of Segment 2 include wood poles and portal-type towers, tubular steel poles, and lattice towers.

Until Segment 2 reaches Arroyo Simi, the landscape is largely agricultural and industrial, composed of crops, homes/farms, and associated out buildings and infrastructure including farm roads. Foreground views include rolling hills and flat valley bottoms with agricultural crops such as orchards and low-growing crops. Background views are obscured by topography. Viewers in this portion of the Proposed Project area would include motorists along SR 118 and rural residents associated with agriculture. Motorists along SR 118 are accustomed to views of utility infrastructure in this area as there are many existing structures as previously described and as shown in Figure 5.1-2, Photos 1, 2, and 3. Generally, views from SR 118 would include young orchards, field crops, or clusters of trees associated with residential development that would provide open to partially obstructed views of the Proposed Project. Motorists would have open and unobstructed views of the Proposed Project as it crosses SR 118. The visual quality of this viewshed is considered representative, as views from the roadway largely include agricultural lands, residential development, and open space.

Once Segment 2 crosses Arroyo Simi, the landscape becomes more residential in character along the eastern side of the alignment while gently rolling orchards and associated roads and structures characterize the western side of the alignment. Once the alignment begins to leave the valley and climbs in elevation, rolling orchards are on both sides of the alignment. Along the ridgeline of the hill are homes and winding roads of a rural character, separated and screened by orchards. Viewers in this portion of Segment 2 would include motorists along local roads and residents. Motorists along Hitch Boulevard would have an unobstructed view of the Proposed Project as it crosses the road, as shown in Figure 5.1-2, Photo 4. Figure 5.1-3, Photos 5 and 6, also show representative views that residents have of Segment 2. Photo 5 shows the view from Citrus Drive looking north. The existing viewshed includes hills with undeveloped open space in the background, and agricultural lands with associated structures and transmission lines (including the portal-type towers and steel poles) in the middleground. Foreground views include homes and trees. Photo 6 shows the view from Yucca Drive looking north, and shows a suburban residential development and entrance gateway backdropped by undeveloped hills with natural vegetation. Transmission towers are prominent on the ridgeline, including two portal-type towers and one tubular steel pole. Residents and motorists would experience partially obscured to open views of the Proposed Project from this location. The visual quality of this viewshed is considered representative, as views largely include agricultural lands, residential development, and open space.

After Segment 2 traverses the hills and enters Santa Rosa Valley, a suburban residential area is located along the eastern side of the alignment until it reaches Santa Rosa Road. The remainder of the valley is agricultural, with a mix of orchards, low-growing crops, and fallow fields. South of Santa Rosa Road, the alignment follows Rosita Road and then begins to climb another series of hills which include the Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA)-managed open space lands. Viewers in this portion of Segment 2 would include motorists along Santa Rosa Road, residents, and recreationalists using the Santa Rosa Park and Conejo Canyons Open Space. Motorists along Santa Rosa Road currently experience views of largely undeveloped hills in the middleground with suburban residential development and agricultural crops in the foreground. Figure 5.1-3, Photo 7, shows the view from Santa Rosa Road near Gerry Road looking southeast towards the Proposed Project alignment. Existing conductor along Santa Rosa Road is prominent in the foreground, along



SOURCE: SCE, 2013

Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line Project. 207584.15

Figure 5.1-1

Viewpoint Locations and Key Observation Points

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Photo 1: View from SR 118 looking northeast



Photo 2: View from SR 118 near Montair Dr looking south



Photo 3: View from SR 118 near Hitch Boulevard looking southeast



Photo 4: View from Hitch Boulevard looking west



Photo 5: View from Citrus Drive looking north



Photo 6: View from Yucca Drive North looking north



Photo 7: View from Santa Rosa Road near Gerry Road looking southeast



Photo 8a: View from Lizard Rock Trail near Hill Canyon Road looking west

SOURCE: ESA, 2013

Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line Project . 207584.15
Figure 5.1-3
 Context Photographs

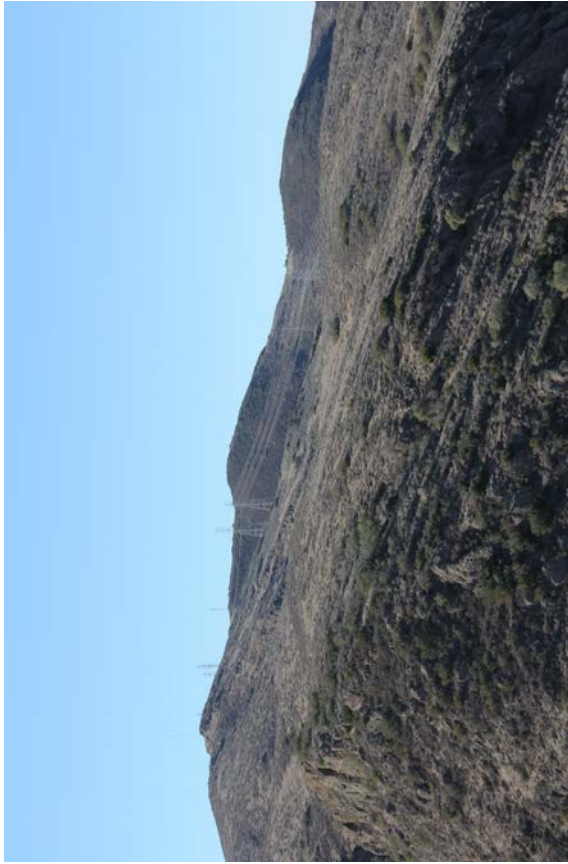


Photo 8b: View from trail near Hill Canyon Road looking northwest



Photo 9: View from Lynnmere Trail looking west

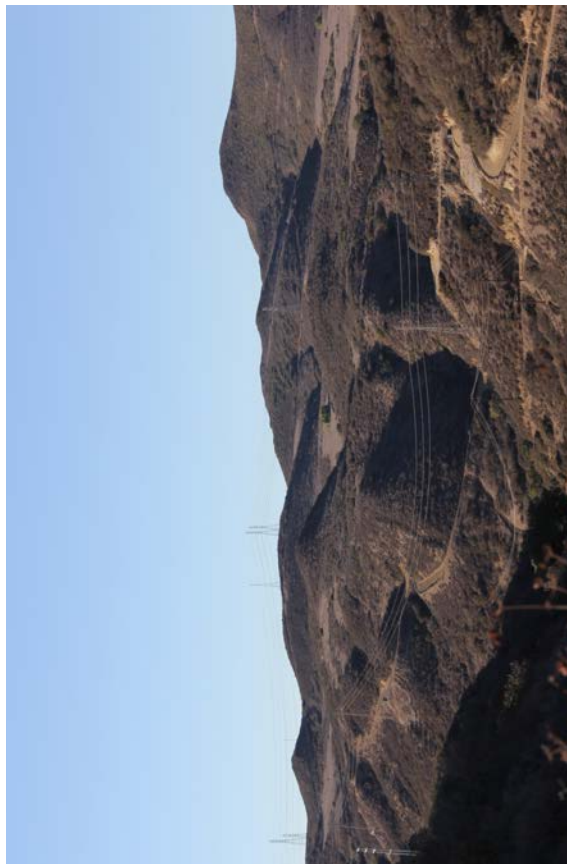


Photo 10: View from Conejo Center Drive near Rancho Conejo Boulevard looking northwest

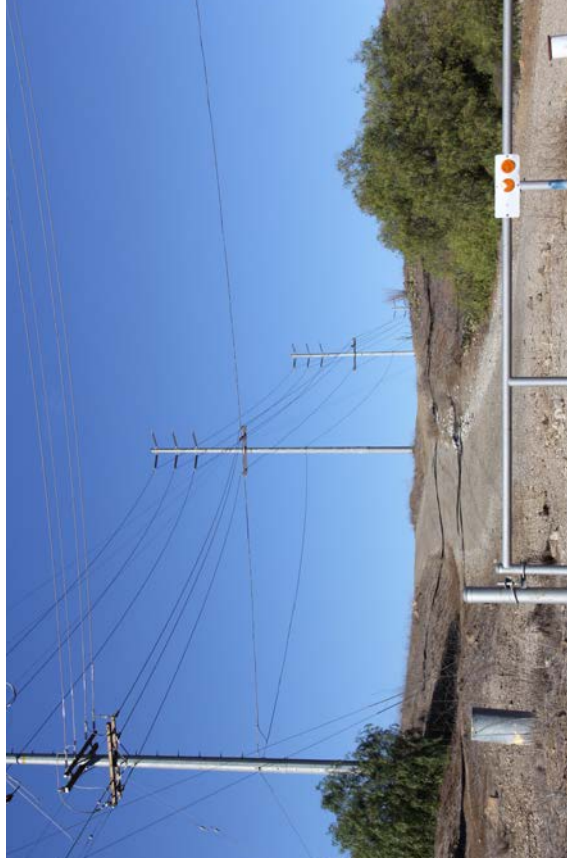


Photo 11: View from North Wendy Drive looking north

Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line Project . 207584.15

SOURCE: ESA, 2013

Figure 5.1-4
Context Photographs

with agriculture located south of the road. Transmission lines and lattice-type towers are visible along the hills in the middleground, along with hills and open space.

Figure 5.1-3, Photo 8a, shows a northwesterly view from the Canyon Overlook on Lizard Rock Trail in the Wildwood Open Space. Viewers currently experience scenic views of the Santa Rosa Valley and hills beyond, creating a landscape that is made up of a variety of textures, and includes agricultural crops, orchards, roads, scattered buildings, naturally vegetated hillsides, and rugged mountains in the background. Segment 2 would be visible in this viewshed, adjacent to existing portal-type towers and tubular steel poles (TSPs). Motorists and recreationalists would experience partially obscured to open views of the Proposed Project in the distance. The visual quality of this viewshed from Wildwood Open Space is considered representative to distinctive, as views include agricultural areas, buildings, and large areas of undeveloped open space.

Segment 3

Segment 3 extends approximately 3 miles from the southern end of Segment 2, and then south and east to the northern terminus of Segment 4, approximately 0.3 mile west of the intersection of Conejo Center Drive and Rancho Conejo Boulevard. With the exception of approximately 400 feet at its northern end, all of Segment 3 is located in the Wildwood and Conejo Canyons Open Space areas. Segment 3 is within existing SCE ROW that includes steel lattice towers and 220 kV conductors.

The landscape in this area is undeveloped with low-growing natural vegetation and winding trails with expansive views. Viewers of Segment 3 would primarily include recreationalists using the trail system in the Wildwood and Conejo Canyons Open Space areas. Figure 5.1-4, Photo 8b shows a view from the Canyon Overlook on Lizard Rock Trail in the Wildwood Open Space, looking east towards Segment 3 of the Proposed Project alignment. Recreationalists would experience obscured (due to topography) to open views of the Proposed Project. Despite the presence of existing electrical infrastructure, the visual quality of this viewshed is considered distinctive as it includes undeveloped open hills that are exemplary of the region's natural resources.

Segment 4 and Newbury Substation

Segment 4 extends approximately 1 mile from the southern terminus of Segment 3 to the Newbury Substation located off Lawrence Drive in the City of Thousand Oaks. Segment 4 would be constructed entirely within the existing SCE ROW. Before Segment 4 enters Newbury Substation it traverses undeveloped open space land. The Newbury Substation site is currently developed with infrastructure typical of a 66/16 kV substation, with a security fence surrounding the substation, a second perimeter fence that follows the property boundary, and mature trees. The substation is surrounded by light industrial buildings to the east and northeast, open space and light industrial buildings to the south, and open space to the north and west.

The majority of Segment 4 is within undeveloped open space, including the Conejo Canyons Open Space, with the exception of the last 1,200 feet of the alignment before it enters the Newbury Substation at the base of the hill. This final stretch of the alignment and Newbury Substation are located on the western edge of a light industrial area with low 1-story warehouse

style buildings, parking lots, and an assortment of street trees and other manicured landscape plants. Viewers in this area would include recreationalists in the Conejo Canyons Open Space and surrounding trails in Thousand Oaks, residents, employees in the industrial areas, and motorists on local roads.

Figure 5.1-4, Photo 9, shows the viewshed from the perspective of recreationalists using the Lynnmere Trail and surrounding residents. The hills in the background are undeveloped, with the exception of a water tank and the existing subtransmission lines. A suburban residential development is in the middleground portion of the view, with a naturally vegetated canyon in the foreground. Figure 5.1-4, Photo 10, shows the view that recreationalists and motorists have from Conejo Center Drive. The existing viewshed is composed of sage-scrub and chaparral-vegetated rolling hills with diagonal and vertical lines of transmission lines, including wood poles and lattice steel towers, along with the curvilinear lines of roads. The visual quality of this viewshed is considered distinctive, as it includes predominantly panoramic views of rolling hillsides. Figure 5.1-4, Photo 11 shows the view from the northern end of Wendy Drive, where many people access the Conejo Canyons Open Space area. The view is entirely of the foreground, and existing transmission lines and steel poles dominate the view. Recreationalists, residents, and motorists would experience obscured (due to topography) to open views of the Proposed Project. The visual quality of this viewshed is considered representative as it includes undeveloped hills developed with transmission lines abutting a light industrial area.

Viewer Types and Exposures

Viewer types and exposure conditions vary substantially in the study area. Public viewer groups evaluated include: motorists along U.S. 101 (a state eligible scenic highway), SR 118, Santa Rosa Road, and local roads; visitors to the Conejo Canyons Open Space area, Santa Rosa Valley Park, and other open space recreational areas; and neighborhood residents in the City of Moorpark, City of Thousand Oaks, and unincorporated Ventura County.

For each of the viewer groups identified in the study area, viewer exposure conditions were determined based on knowledge of the Proposed Project areas and a site visit conducted on December 11, 2013 (ESA, 2013). Variables considered include the viewing distance, angle of view, the extent to which views are screened or open, and duration of view. Viewing angle and extent of visibility considers the relative location of the Proposed Project facility to the viewer and whether visibility conditions are enclosed or panoramic, or limited by intervening vegetation, structures, or terrain.

Duration of view pertains to the amount of time the Proposed Project facilities or area would typically be seen from a sensitive viewpoint. In general, duration of view would be less in instances where Proposed Project components would be seen for short or intermittent periods (such as from major travel routes and recreation destination roads) and greater in instances where Proposed Project components would be seen regularly and repeatedly (such as from public use areas).

The primary viewpoints used in the analysis include Key Observation Points (KOPs), which have been designated as SR 118, Santa Rosa Road, Santa Rosa Valley Park, and COSCA-managed open

space. Other viewpoints used in the analysis include those from roads in residential areas in unincorporated Ventura County, such as Citrus Drive and Yucca Drive North; major roads such as SR 23; and trails such as the Lizard Rock Trail near Hill Canyon Road, Lynnmere Trail near Calle Yucca, and the trail at the terminus of North Wendy Drive, all in the City of Thousand Oaks. These points are depicted as Viewpoint Locations and Key Observation Points on Figure 5.1-1.

Motorists on Regional or Scenic Travel Routes

In the study area, U.S. 101 and the portion of SR 118 east of SR 23 are eligible for state scenic highway designation. In addition, the portion of SR 118 west of SR 23, Santa Rosa Road, and SR 23 are considered major roadways that provide regional access to the study area. **Table 5.1-1** summarizes major roads in the Proposed Project and alternatives study area. Traffic volumes are classified as low (less than 10,000 vehicle trips per day), moderate (10,000 to 20,000 vehicle trips per day), and high (over 20,000 vehicle trips per day). Because local roadways in the study area generally experience low traffic volumes, they are not evaluated individually in this section. For additional information on local roadways, see Section 5.17, *Transportation and Traffic*.

**TABLE 5.1-1
 MAJOR ROADS IN PROPOSED PROJECT AREA**

State Routes and U.S. Highways	Scenic Status	Relation to Proposed Project and Alternatives	Traffic Volumes
U.S. 101	Eligible State Scenic Highway Eligible Ventura County Scenic Highway City of Thousand Oaks Scenic Route	Proposed Project comes within 0.5 mile of Segment 3 and Segment 4.	High
SR 118	Eligible Ventura County Scenic Highway	Proposed Project crosses once and runs parallel within 600 feet to 1,500 feet for 0.6 mile.	High
SR 23	NA	Proposed Project and Moorpark Substation are 1.6 miles to the west.	High
Santa Rosa Road	NA	Proposed Project crosses once.	Moderate

NA = not applicable

SOURCE: Caltrans, 2009

For additional descriptions of the scenic status of roads in the study area, see *Regulatory Setting*, below. For additional information on traffic volumes and major road descriptions, see Section 5.17, *Transportation and Traffic*.

U.S. Highway 101

The Proposed Project would be within foreground and middleground views from U.S. 101. Views from U.S. 101 in the vicinity of the study area are typically in an enclosed landscape due to the development of commercial, suburban residential areas, and trees in the foreground. However, gaps between buildings and vegetation provide glimpses to the typically undeveloped hills in the background. In addition, the ridgeline of the surrounding hills defines the horizon and can be viewed

beyond development in the foreground. Views of the Proposed Project would range from fully to partially obscured, and would only be visible for a brief period of time due to high traffic speeds.

State Route 118

The Proposed Project alignment would be within foreground views from SR 118, where the proposed alignment would cross the highway. Views from SR 118 in the vicinity of the Proposed Project include agricultural, light industrial, and suburban residential developments. See the description for Segment 1 and views from SR 118 in the *Existing Visual Quality of the Region* discussion, above.

State Route 23

The Proposed Project alignment would be within middleground to background views from SR 23. However, views of the Proposed Project would be fully to partially obscured by buildings, trees, and terrain. In addition, as shown in Table 5.1-1, the Proposed Project would be at a distance that would make it not easily discerned from its surroundings of existing industrial and residential development.

Santa Rosa Road

The Proposed Project alignment would be within foreground views from Santa Rosa Road, where the proposed alignment would cross the highway. Views from Santa Rosa Road in the vicinity of the Proposed Project would be of agricultural lands and suburban residential developments. See the description for Segment 2 and views from Santa Rosa Road in the *Existing Visual Quality of the Region* discussion, above.

Park and Recreation Areas

Open Space Areas

Two designated open space areas are located in the study area, both managed by COSCA.

Conejo Canyons Open Space is a system of deeply eroded canyons, plateaus, and ridgelines in the northwest portion of the Conejo Valley. This area totals 1,628 acres. It is bordered on the north and west by the City of Thousand Oaks, on the east by Hill Canyon Road, and on the south by industrial uses. On clear days, trails in this area afford panoramic views of Ventura and the coastline, as well as inland to the Topa Topa mountains north of Ojai. Most of this area is owned by the City of Thousand Oaks (City of Thousand Oaks, 2014). A neighborhood trail through the Conejo Canyons Open Space is accessible at two points near Wendy Drive (COSCA, 2006). As depicted in Figures 5.1-1 and 5.1-4 (Photo 11), recreational viewers in this area would have foreground views of the Proposed Project. People visiting the open space include hikers, bikers, horseback riders, students, and educators. The duration of viewer exposure would be moderate, as recreationalists would have fleeting but frequent views of Proposed Project components, as they traveled along trails.

Wildwood Park Open Space comprises the largest contiguous open space unit in Thousand Oaks. This area totals 1,732 acres. Trails provide access to most parts of Wildwood Park, and several picnic areas are located near Wildwood Creek. Most of Wildwood Park is owned by the Conejo

Recreation and Park District, with lesser amounts owned by COSCA (COSCA, 2013). The Canyon Overlook on the Lizard Rock Trail is the only area in the open space that the Proposed Project would be visible from. As depicted in Figure 5.1-3 (Photo 8a) and Figure 5.1-4 (Photo 8b), recreational viewers, including hikers using trails that traverse the open space, would have foreground to middleground views of the Proposed Project alignment. Photo 8a shows views of the Santa Rosa Valley and hills beyond, creating a landscape that is made up of a variety of textures, including agricultural crops, orchards, roads, scattered buildings, naturally vegetated hillsides, and rugged mountains in the background. Photo 8b shows a typical view of the alignment within the open space area that viewers at this portion of the trail would experience. Views would range from panoramic at high elevations to obscured at lower to mid-elevations due to intervening terrain. People visiting the open space include hikers, bikers, horseback riders, students, and educators.

Santa Rosa Valley Park

Santa Rosa Valley Park, a 50-acre property owned by Ventura County, is located approximately 0.25 mile east of the Proposed Project. The park offers 50 acres of natural open space that is suitable for horseback riding, hiking, and picnicking. Two equestrian riding areas are available (Ventura County, 2015). Recreational users would have panoramic to partially obscured views of the Proposed Project within a foreground/middleground distance, due to intervening buildings and vegetation.

Visual Sensitivity

Visual sensitivity is a composite measurement of the overall susceptibility of an area or viewer group to adverse visual or aesthetic impacts, given the combined factors of landscape visual quality, viewer types, and exposure conditions. **Table 5.1-2, Summary of Visual Sensitivity Findings Viewer Types, Visual Exposures, and Visual Quality**, summarizes the visual sensitivity of the major viewer types that would be affected by the Proposed Project and alternatives.

Regulatory Setting

State

California Scenic Highway Program

In 1963, the California legislature created the Scenic Highway Program to protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to the highways. The state regulations and guidelines governing the Scenic Highway Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code, Section 260 et seq. A highway may be designated as “scenic” depending on how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the travelers’ enjoyment of the view.

No portion of the Proposed Project or alternatives would be visible from a designated State Scenic Highway; however, as noted above, portions of the Proposed Project would be visible from U.S. 101 which is listed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as an Eligible State Scenic Highway in Ventura County. SR 118 is listed as an Eligible State Scenic Highway between SR 23 and the eastern Ventura County border, approximately 2 miles east of the Proposed Project area (Caltrans, 2009).

**TABLE 5.1-2
SUMMARY OF VISUAL SENSITIVITY FINDINGS
VIEWER TYPES, VISUAL EXPOSURES, AND VISUAL QUALITY**

Viewer Type	Visual Quality	View Exposure	Visual Sensitivity	Visible Proposed Project Component(s)
Travel Routes				
U.S. 101	Representative	Foreground/Midground Distance Obstructed Views High Number of Viewers Low View Duration	Low-moderate	Segments 3 and 4
State Route 118	Representative	Foreground Distance Unobstructed Views High Number of Viewers Low View Duration	Moderate-High	Moorpark Substation/Segment1, and Segment 2
State Route 23	Representative	Midground/Background Distance Obstructed Views High Number of Viewers Low View Duration	Low	Segment 2
Santa Rosa Road	Representative	Foreground Distance Unobstructed Views Low Number of Viewers Low View Duration	Moderate	Segment 2
Park/Recreation				
Conejo Canyons Open Space	Distinct	Fore, Middle, and Background Distances Obstructed to Unobstructed Views Moderate Number of Viewers Moderate View Duration	High	Segments 2, 3, and 4, and Newbury Substation (Segment 3 and 4 are within the open space area)
Wildwood Park Open Space	Distinct	Fore, Middle, and Background Distances Partially Obstructed Views Moderate Number of Viewers Moderate View Duration	High	Segments 2 and 3
Santa Rosa Valley Park	Distinct/ Representative	Foreground Distance Obstructed to Unobstructed Views Moderate Number of Viewers Moderate View Duration	High	Segment 2

Local

CPUC General Order No. 131-D explains that local land use regulations would not apply to the Proposed Project. However, CPUC staff considered the following policies identified in local General Plans to identify visual resources and inform the determination of significance thresholds in the study area:

Ventura County General Plan

The following goals and policies identified in the Ventura County General Plan pertain to scenic resources (Ventura County, various dates):

Goal 1.7.1-1: Preserve and protect the significant open views and visual resources of the County.

Goal 1.7.1-2: Protect the visual resources within the viewshed of lakes and State and County designated scenic highways, and other scenic areas as may be identified by an area plan.

Goal 1.7.1-3: Enhance and maintain the visual appearance of buildings and developments.

Policy 1.7.2-1: Notwithstanding Policy 1.7.2-2, discretionary development which would significantly degrade visual resources or significantly alter or obscure public views of visual resources shall be prohibited unless no feasible mitigation measures are available and the decision-making body determines there are overriding considerations.

Policy 1.7.2-4: The Planning Division shall continue to implement the landscaping requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and the "Guide to Landscape Plans" to enhance the appearance of discretionary development.

Ventura County has designated Scenic Resource Areas with specific scenic resource policies, which include the areas around Lake Sherwood, Lake Piru, Lake Casistas, and Matilija Lake; all of these locations are outside of the Proposed Project viewshed.

The General Plan further deems as Scenic Resource Areas (1) the areas within 0.5 mile of adopted County or State Scenic Highways designated as Open Space, Agricultural, or Rural; and (2) the parcels that are contiguous to an adopted County or State Scenic Highway that are designated Urban, Existing, Community, or State and Federal Facilities. There are no designated County or State Scenic Highways within the viewshed of the Proposed Project. Eligible County Scenic Highways include U.S. 101 and SR 118, which are within the viewshed of the Proposed Project. U.S. 101 is located approximately 0.5 mile south of the Proposed Project, and the Proposed Project crosses SR 118.

City of Moorpark General Plan

The following goals and policies identified in the City of Moorpark General Plan pertain to scenic resources (City of Moorpark, 1986):

Goal 1: Preserve and enhance the unique aesthetic and visual qualities of Moorpark as a city with scenic topographic features and elements that promote the quality of life that Moorpark citizens pursue.

Policy 1.1: Protect the scenic viewsheds both to and from the City of Moorpark. This shall include those views extending north to the Santa Susana Mountains and south to Tierra Rejada Valley. This would extend to any new development and to any future renovations and additions that may potentially obscure a viewshed.

Policy 1.2: Study, monitor, and link the existing Greenbelt Agreement Area to include landscape arterial roadways as entrance ways to the City, bikeways, equestrian paths and hiking trails, to create a network of aesthetically pleasing links into and around the City.

Policy 1.4: Develop a hillside conservation, preservation, and management program that functions to discourage ridgeline development and/or alteration.

Policy 1.5: Explore with SCE and local utilities the potential to underground existing above-ground lines.

Scenic corridors identified in the City of Moorpark General Plan, which are in the vicinity of the Proposed Project, would not have views of the Proposed Project area.

The plan also states that the views of the mountain ranges to the north and open space lands to the south and west are important scenic resources that the City has to offer, worth maintaining and preserving.

City of Thousand Oaks General Plan

The following policies identified in the City of Thousand Oaks General Plan pertain to scenic resources (City of Thousand Oaks, 2001):

Scenic Highways Element

Goal: To identify, establish, preserve, and enhance a system of scenic highways within the City of Thousand Oaks.

Policy 1: Designate a variety of scenic highways within the City in order to give the motorist a variety of different urban and semi-rural geographical settings of unique scenic value.

Policy 5: Prevent the removal of mature trees without proper consideration of their scenic or historic value.

Policy 9: Coordinate program for undergrounding utility lines with the achievement of scenic corridors.

Policy 10: Coordinate with Ventura County to insure compatibility with the development of a County-wide Scenic Highway System.

U.S. 101 is listed as a City Scenic Highway, and is located 0.5 mile south of the Proposed Project. As discussed above, U.S. 101 would provide fleeting views of the Proposed Project.

Open Space Element

Policy OS-25: Facilities necessary to serve visitors, such as trails, trailheads, access roads and parking lots, kiosks, restrooms, signage shall be designed and installed so as to have no impact on sensitive natural resources within the open space area, and minimal impact on non-sensitive resources. Where emergency facilities or public service and utility facilities must be located in a natural open space area, they and any necessary access roads shall be located and designed to minimize impacts.

Policy OS-30: Continue to work with utility companies and agencies, and the Ventura County Flood Control District to accommodate utility lines and flood control facilities where such improvements are necessary for public health and safety, while minimizing disturbance to open space resources.

City of Thousand Oaks Zoning Ordinance

The City of Thousand Oaks Zoning Ordinance uses overlay zones to protect particular natural or cultural features, including scenic views. Overlay zones build on the underlying zoning by establishing supplemental or stricter standards and criteria that apply in addition to the standards of

the underlying zone districts. The City of Thousand Oaks is bounded by prominent natural land forms and knolls including, but not limited to, the Santa Monica Mountains, the Conejo Mountain, the Mount Clef Ridge, and the Conejo Ridge. The *Protected Ridgeline Overlay District (PR)* promotes the preservation of natural views and open space in the district with regulations to preserve natural lands forms, maintain and preserve open space, and protect the scenic backdrop to the City's major roadways (City of Thousand Oaks, 2009). Segments 2, 3, and 4 of the Proposed Project would traverse parcels zoned *PR*. The following subsections would have implications for visual resources:

Section 9-4.3502. Protected ridgeline development standards

- (a) Within the Protected Ridgeline Overlay Zone, no new structure or addition to an existing structure shall be placed or constructed, no grading shall occur and, except as to meet fire clearance requirements, no native vegetation shall be removed within three hundred (300') feet horizontally or one hundred (100') feet vertically of the crest of a protected ridgeline. However, if because of the limited size of a parcel, the topography or other physical site constraints there is no suitable location for the addition to an existing structure or the development of one single family detached home on residential zoned parcel or a viable use on a commercial or industrial zoned parcel, minor encroachments into this area or development on the parcel may be authorized by the Planning Commission consistent with subsection (b) of this section. No subdivision map shall be approved creating a parcel or a lot within three hundred (300') feet horizontally or one hundred (100') feet vertically of the crest of a protected ridgeline, unless all development and grading activity on said parcel(s) or lot(s) is prohibited, or limited to antennae, open space uses, water reservoirs or similar uses of benefit to the general public.
- (b) If, because of the parcel's limited size or other physical or topographic constraints, development, grading or clearance of native vegetation can only occur within the restricted area of a Protected Ridgeline Overlay Zone the following development standards shall apply:
 - 1) Any structure shall be located on the portions of the parcel which are least visible from roadways depicted on the Circulation Element of the General Plan and existing developed areas.
 - 2) No structure shall be placed or constructed in such a way that it silhouettes against the skyline above the ridgeline when viewed from any roadway depicted on the Circulation Element of the General Plan.
 - 3) No grading or berming shall occur which alters the natural contours or changes the elevation of the crest of the ridgeline in order to create a pad.
 - 4) All buildings shall be low profile. No residential structure shall be higher than seventeen (17') feet measured from the finished grade at the center of the building wall to the highest roof elevation and any new dwelling unit, including any garage and accessory structures, shall not exceed, in total, two thousand (2,000) square feet. For existing structures, no alteration or addition to that structure shall raise the height or the elevation of the existing roof.
 - 5) All buildings shall be setback at least fifty (50') feet from the edge of the finished pad.

- 6) Berms, rounded contour grading and landscaping shall be used when necessary to soften the visual impacts created by structures and grading.
- 7) The grading, design, construction, vegetation clearance, landscaping and development shall sensitively conform to and fit into the natural terrain through creative development techniques, such as, but not limited to, split-level designs, terracing, use of native plant types, and natural blending architectural features (such as the angle of the roof line appearing as an extension of the adjacent downslope).
- 8) Only low profile shaded street lighting, if needed, shall be used to reduce down slope light spillover and night glare.

Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency

COSCA was created in 1977 as a joint powers agency between the City of Thousand Oaks and the Conejo Recreation and Park District for the purpose of acquiring and managing natural open spaces within and around the Conejo Valley. The Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) forming COSCA enables the two agencies to (COSCA, 2013):

“jointly exercise their legal powers to create a jurisdictional framework for the conservation of natural open space lands, assure coordination of local land use and resource management decisions and establish an entity to focus community resources toward achievement of adopted City General Plan goals.”

COSCA manages more than 12,000 acres of open space lands and 140 miles of trails. In 2011, the COSCA Board of Directors authorized the preparation of a long-range strategic plan, which includes goals and objectives adopted in 1989 through the COSCA Management Policies and Guidelines. The plan generally outlines goals regarding the preservation and protection of existing and proposed parklands, recreation areas, and other designated open space lands (COSCA, 2013). The Proposed Project would run along the western side of the Conejo Canyons open space area (City of Thousand Oaks, 2014). The Proposed Project would also be visible from the Canyon Overlook along the Lizard Rock Trail (COSF, 2005).

5.1.2 Significance Criteria

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project would result in significant aesthetic effects on the environment if it would:

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
- c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or
- d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Definition and Use of Significance Criteria

An adverse visual impact may occur when: (1) an action perceptibly changes the existing physical features of the landscape that are characteristic of the region or locale; (2) an action introduces new features to the physical landscape that are perceptibly uncharacteristic of the region or locale, or become visually dominant in the viewshed; or (3) an action blocks or totally obscures aesthetic features of the landscape. The degree of visual impact depends on how noticeable the adverse change is. The noticeability of a visual impact is a function of a project's features, context, and viewing conditions (angle of view, distance, and primary viewing directions). The key factors in determining the degree of visual change are visual contrast, project dominance, and view blockage.

Visual Contrast

Visual contrast is a measure of the degree of change in line, form, color, and texture that a project would create, when compared to the existing landscape. Visual contrast ranges from none to strong, and is defined as:

- **None** –The element contrast is not visible or perceived;
- **Weak** –The element contrast can be seen but does not attract attention;
- **Moderate** –The element contrast begins to attract attention and begins to dominate the characteristic landscape; and
- **Strong** – The element contrast demands the viewer's attention and cannot be overlooked.

Project Dominance

Visual dominance is a measure of a project feature's apparent size relative to other visible landscape features in the viewshed, or seen area. A feature's dominance is affected by its relative location in the viewshed and the distance between the viewer and feature. The level of dominance can range from subordinate to dominant.

View Blockage or Impairment

View blockage or impairment is a measure of the degree to which a project's features would obstruct or block views to aesthetic features due to its position and/or scale. Blockage of aesthetic landscape features or views can cause adverse visual impacts, particularly in instances where scenic or view orientations are important to the use, value, or function of the land use.

Overall Adverse Visual Impact

Overall adverse visual impact reflects the composite visual changes to both the directly affected landscape and from sensitive viewing locations. The visual impact levels referenced in this EIR indicate the relative degree of overall change to the visual environment that the Proposed Project and alternatives would create, considering visual sensitivity, visual contrast, view blockage, and project dominance.

In general, the determination of impact significance is based on combined factors of Visual Sensitivity and the degree of Visual Change that the Proposed Project or alternative would cause. **Table 5.1-3, Guidelines for Determining Adverse Visual Impact Significance**, shows how the inter-relationship of these two overall factors determines whether adverse visual impacts are significant.

**TABLE 5.1-3
GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING ADVERSE VISUAL IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE**

Overall Visual Sensitivity	Overall Visual Change				
	Low	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to High	High
Low	Not Significant	Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant
Low to Moderate	Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant
Moderate	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse and Potentially Significant	Adverse and Potentially Significant
Moderate to High	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse and Potentially Significant	Adverse and Potentially Significant	Significant
High	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse and Potentially Significant	Adverse and Potentially Significant	Significant	Significant

Not Significant impacts may or may not be perceptible but are considered minor in the context of existing landscape characteristics and view opportunity.

Adverse but Not Significant Impacts are perceived as negative but do not exceed environmental thresholds.

Adverse and Potentially Significant Impacts are perceived as negative and may exceed environmental thresholds depending on project- and site-specific circumstances.

Significant impacts with feasible mitigation may be reduced to less-than-significant levels or avoided altogether. Without mitigation or avoidance measures, significant impacts would exceed environmental thresholds.

Visual Simulations

Visual simulations, presented as part of this aesthetic analysis, illustrate representative “before” and “after” visual conditions in the Proposed Project area. In the text below, the evaluation of potential impacts associated with the Proposed Project is based, in part, on comparing the “before” and “after” visual conditions as portrayed in the set of simulations and assessing the degree of visual change that the Proposed Project would bring about. The significance determination is based on the evaluation criteria described above.

The simulations presented in this section illustrate the location, scale, and conceptual appearance of the Proposed Project as seen from five key viewing locations. The set of images shows views from various places along the Proposed Project alignment, including Segments 2 through 4. Figure 5.1-1 depicts the simulation photo viewpoint locations for the visual simulations in **Figures 5.1-5 through 5.1-9**.



Existing view from SR 118 looking west



Simulated view from SR 118 looking west

SOURCE: SCE, 2013

Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line Project . 207584.15

Figure 5.1-5
Visual Simulation A - State Route 118



Existing view from Santa Rosa Road looking west



Simulated view from Santa Rosa Road looking west



Existing view from Santa Rosa Road looking southwest



Simulated view from Santa Rosa Road looking southwest

SOURCE: SCE, 2013

Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line Project . 207584.15

Figure 5.1-7
Visual Simulation C - Santa Rosa Road



Existing view from Santa Rosa Valley Park looking northwest



Simulated view from Santa Rosa Valley Park looking northwest

SOURCE: SCE, 2013

Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line Project . 207584.15

Figure 5.1-8
Visual Simulation D - Santa Rosa Valley Park



Existing View from COSCA-managed open space looking north



Simulated View from COSCA-managed open space looking north

SOURCE: PG&E, 2013

Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line Project . 207584.15

Figure 5.1-9
Visual Simulation E - COSCA-Managed Open Space

These visual simulations are presented in color, two images per page with the existing visual condition photograph on top of the page and with a photo rendering visual simulation depicting the Proposed Project on the bottom of the page. These images were photographed in November of 2012 using a single lens reflex (SLR) camera. All of the images use a 50mm lens, which represents a horizontal view angle of 40 degrees, which is the “normal” field of view for the average human observer. The visual simulations of the Proposed Project portray representative public views. The simulation vantage points are as follows:

- A. View from SR 118 looking west toward Segment 2 (Figure 5.1-5);
- B. View from Santa Rosa Road looking west toward Segment 2 (Figure 5.1-6);
- C. View from Santa Rosa Road looking southwest toward Segment 2 (Figure 5.1-7);
- D. View from Santa Rosa Valley Park looking northwest toward Segment 2 (Figure 5.1-8); and
- E. View from COSCA-Managed Open Space looking north toward Segments 3 and 2 (Figure 5.1-9)

5.1.3 Applicant Proposed Measures

SCE has not identified any applicant proposed measures to reduce Proposed Project impacts on visual resources.

5.1.4 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

Impact 5.1-1: The Proposed Project could have an adverse effect on scenic vistas. *Less than significant* (Class III)

Scenic vistas in the vicinity of the Proposed Project include trails that look out over broad scenic landscapes, including the Lizard Rock trail near Hill Canyon Road in the Wildwood Park Open Space and Lynnmere Trail near Calle Yucca and the trail at the terminus of Wendy Drive, within the Conejo Canyon Open Space area. All of these locations are within the City of Thousand Oaks.

Figure 5.1-3, Photo 8a and Figure 5.1-4, Photo 8b show existing views of the Proposed Project area as viewed from the Lizard Rock Trail within the Wildwood Park Open Space. As shown in Photo 8a, electrical infrastructure is a part of the current viewshed, including an existing steel lattice transmission line tower on an undeveloped hillside. From the location shown in Photo 8a, the Proposed Project would introduce TSPs and additional conductor into the viewshed. The placement of the TSPs would be immediately adjacent to the existing steel lattice towers, although the TSPs would have a simpler, more streamlined profile than the steel lattice towers. The infrastructure proposed under the Proposed Project would be visible, but would not dominate the landscape or block views of the scenic vista. Given the presence and similarity of existing electrical infrastructure and the distance between the viewer and the new poles, the new infrastructure contrast would be weak; it would be visible but would not demand attention or dominate the characteristic landscape. Therefore, the Proposed Project would result in an

incremental visual change within the viewshed and would not substantially alter the intrinsic character or composition of the existing view. Overall visual change would be low-moderate.

Photo 8b shows the existing lattice towers in the valley below Lizard Rock Trail and the Wildwood Park Open Space. The viewer would be approximately 0.75 mile away from the Proposed Project, placing the Proposed Project in the foreground/middleground. In this viewshed, an existing portal-type tower transmission line is located on the valley floor, adjacent to low growing crops. The Proposed Project would result in installation of TSPs and conductor that would parallel the existing portal-type/lattice tower type transmission line. As described above, Proposed Project TSPs would have a simpler, more streamlined profile than the portal-type towers, and would have a weak visual contrast as poles would be visible but would not dominate the characteristic landscape. The new TSPs would be seen in context of the existing facilities and would not be immediately apparent due to distance and as details become indiscernible. Moreover, the Proposed Project infrastructure would not obstruct or block views of the scenic vista. Overall visual change would be low-moderate.

Though the visual sensitivity of the scenic vistas within Conejo Canyons Open Space and Wildwood Park Open Space is high, in conjunction with the low-moderate visual change associated with construction of the Proposed Project, impacts would be adverse, but not significant (see Table 5.1-3, *Guidelines for Determining Adverse Visual Impact Significance*).

Mitigation: None required.

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway. (No Impact)

There are no designated state scenic highways in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. Therefore, there would be no impacts to scenic resources within a state scenic highway from construction, operation, or maintenance of the Proposed Project (No Impact).

c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

Construction

Construction-related impacts to visual quality would result from the presence of construction equipment, materials, and work crews at Moorpark and Newbury substations, along the proposed subtransmission alignment corridor, and on local access roads and staging areas. Crews would be required to maintain clean work areas as they proceed along the line and would not leave any debris behind at any stage of the project. The construction impacts to visual quality would be relatively short-term, approximately 10 months in total, although impacts along the subtransmission portion would be of shorter duration, spread out along different portions of the proposed subtransmission alignment.

A small portion of Segment 2 (at TSP locations 26 through 28), all of Segment 3 (TSP locations 29 through 40), and a portion of Segment 4 (TSP locations 41 through 52) would be located within a zone designated by the City of Thousand Oaks as *Open Space – Protected Ridgeline Overlay District*. As discussed earlier in this section under *Regulatory Setting*, the Protected Ridgeline Overlay zoning designation promotes the preservation of natural views and open space in the district with regulations to preserve natural land forms, maintain and preserve open space, and protect the scenic backdrop to the City’s major roadways (City of Thousand Oaks, 2009).

CPUC General Order No. 131-D explains that local land use regulations would not apply to the Proposed Project; as such, the Proposed Project would not have to be consistent with the City of Thousand Oaks zoning requirements. However, for informational purposes, the Proposed Project may be inconsistent with *Section 9-4.3502. Protected ridgeline development standards*, as it would construct new structures (i.e., TSPs), grade areas for TSP installation and road rehabilitation, and remove native vegetation within 300 feet horizontally or 100 feet vertically of the crest of a protected ridgeline. The removal of vegetation and grading related to the installation of new TSPs would not alter the contours of or change the elevation of the crest of the ridgeline, however, and would not substantially obstruct natural views and open space.

Visual impacts from construction of the Proposed Project are further discussed below.

Impact 5.1-2: Use of temporary staging and laydown areas during the construction period would result in adverse impacts to visual quality. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II)

During construction, SCE would use two staging areas, both located at Moorpark Substation (see Chapter 3, *Project Description*, Section 3.6.2, *Staging Areas*, and Figure 3-5, *Proposed Activities within Segments 1 and 2*, for a description and illustration of the proposed staging area locations, respectively). Both staging areas, up to a combined 5 acres in size, would be located within the perimeter fences and generally screened from adjacent residences and businesses by existing trees and shrubs along the substation perimeter. Material and equipment staged at the substation would include construction trailers, construction equipment, steel poles, wire reels, hardware, insulators, cross arms, signs, consumables (such as filler compound), best management practices (BMP) materials, portable sanitation facilities, and waste materials for salvaging, recycling, or disposal. The staging areas would be effectively screened from the public by the existing trees and shrubs surrounding the staging area; nonetheless, portions of the staging areas could be visible through the fences and trees. Nevertheless, the degree of visual change associated with operation of these temporary staging areas would be low, as the staging areas would be located on a site already in industrial use, and additional equipment brought to the site during the temporary construction period would be visually consistent with the kinds of equipment already on-site. The Proposed Project would not change or degrade the character or quality of the site. Due to the moderate-high visual sensitivity of SR 118 and the low degree of visual change caused by the Proposed Project, the impact to aesthetics caused by the staging areas would be adverse, but not significant (see Table 5.1-3).

Two construction laydown areas would be located near the Proposed Project. One construction laydown area would be 1.5 acres in size and located in the COSCA-managed open space lands along Segment 3 at pole locations 35 and 36, at an existing intersection of access roads within the existing SCE ROW. The second construction laydown area would be 0.2 acre in size and located 600 feet west of the Newbury Substation. Material stored at these locations would include construction equipment, portable sanitation facilities, foundation cages, steel bundles, steel/wood poles, conductor reels, hardware, insulators, cross arms, signage consumables, waste materials for salvaging, recycling, or disposal, and stormwater BMP materials. Construction laydown areas are planned for locations that are previously disturbed and that require limited grading. At the completion of construction activities, the construction laydown areas would be restored to preconstruction conditions. The construction laydown areas would be used on a temporary basis, and adverse visual impacts associated with operation of these temporary sites would be limited to the approximately 10-month construction period.

However, the laydown areas would create a moderate to strong visual contrast for recreationalists and other public viewers, as Proposed Project elements would introduce industrial features inconsistent with the scenic character of the viewshed. The laydown areas would attract, and may demand, viewers' attention, and Proposed Project components would range from subordinate within the viewshed where viewers are further away, to dominant along the trails adjacent to the larger laydown area near poles 35 and 36. Laydown areas and associated equipment could also impede trail access and/or impair scenic views. Overall visual change during construction would be moderate to high. Given high visual sensitivity of the Conejo Canyons Open Space, impacts to aesthetics would be significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measures 5.1-2a and 5.1-2b would minimize potential impacts from the laydown areas.

Mitigation Measure 5.1-2a: SCE shall not place equipment at the laydown or conductor stringing areas any sooner than two weeks prior to the required use.

Mitigation Measure 5.1-2b: SCE shall coordinate with the Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA) to ensure that designated trails in the vicinity of the Proposed Project are not blocked by the laydown areas or conductor stringing areas. SCE shall coordinate with COSCA to post signage at trailheads within the Conejo Canyons Open Space area, alerting recreationalists to construction locations and dates.

Significance after mitigation: Less than significant.

Impact 5.1-3: Use of temporary construction conductor stringing sites during the approximately 10-month construction period could result in adverse impacts to visual quality. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II)*

Temporary pulling/splicing sites would be staged at approximately 32 locations along the Proposed Project alignment. These sites would vary in size, but would typically be about 200 feet by 500 feet for tensioning equipment set-up sites, about 200 feet by 200 feet for pulling

equipment set-up sites, and about 150 feet by 100 feet for splicing equipment set-up sites. Each pull site would be cleaned up and restored to preconstruction conditions after construction. Some pulling/splicing sites would be visible scenic vistas along recreational trails; in particular, the stringing site near pole 40 would be highly visible from and could impede access to the Western Plateau Trail and the Peninsula Loop Trail. While the pulling/stringing set-up locations would only be used on a temporary basis, and views would be of short duration, adverse visual impacts associated with operation of these temporary sites could occur during the approximately 10-month construction period.

Mitigation: Implement Mitigation Measures 5.1-2a and 5.1-2b.

Significance after mitigation: Less than significant.

Impact 5.1-4: Vegetation clearance during construction could result in adverse impacts to visual quality. *Less than significant* (Class III)

During construction, no vegetation clearance is expected to occur within Segment 1. Vegetation removal may occur during construction activities in Proposed Project Segments 2, 3, and 4 depending upon the condition of the access roads, spur roads, and construction work sites at the commencement of construction.

Trees that are directly under the new line and of a variety that could grow into the lines would be removed. For trees that are adjacent to and could interfere with the new line, the decision to trim or remove specific trees would be based on the recommendation of SCE's arborist and/or biologist and would depend on the type, size, location, and condition of the trees. In portions of Segment 2, some tree trimming and/or removal may be necessary. Tree removal or trimming would depend on the type and size of the tree, and its location relative to construction work areas, and/or interference with CPUC General Order 95, *Rules for Overhead Electric Line Construction*. Currently, there is one eucalyptus tree identified just north of SR 118 (Los Angeles Avenue) that would need to be removed; along Montair Drive, approximately 10 to 12 carrotwood trees would need to be trimmed, and two to three pine trees would need to be removed. There are no trees that would be removed or trimmed in Segment 3. In Segment 4, within the outer fenceline of Newbury Substation, approximately 30 to 40 existing trees would require trimming or removal to facilitate construction including myoporum, eucalyptus, Brazilian pepper, California pepper, and Chinese elm trees. Trees would be trimmed or removed using typical arborist equipment, such as bucket trucks, chainsaws, and chippers.

The degree of vegetation removal required under the Proposed Project would not be such that it would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the Proposed Project sites and their surroundings. Visual contrast would be weak to moderate, as the vegetation removal would be visible, but would generally not attract attention or be dominant within the characteristics landscape. Overall visual change from vegetation removal would be low, and impacts would not be significant.

Mitigation: None required.

Operations

Impact 5.1-5: The Proposed Project could substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the Proposed Project site and its surroundings from public views. *Less than significant* (Class III)

Moorpark Substation and Segment 1

As noted above, the Proposed Project alignment begins at the existing Moorpark Substation. Operational impacts associated with the proposed substation modifications would be viewed in the context of the existing substation equipment. Modifications to Moorpark Substation include the installation of approximately 500 feet of new underground 66 kV subtransmission line and a new line position in the 66 kV switchrack entirely within Moorpark Substation. All of these modifications would involve minimal physical changes, occurring within the existing fence line and footprint of the existing substation. Changes could be visible from a limited portion of SR 118; however, these minor equipment improvements would be generally imperceptible to viewers. Furthermore, because the new equipment would be of the same nature as the existing facilities, it would blend in with the existing view, which includes not only the substation facilities, but also existing electricity infrastructure not related to the Proposed Project (e.g., existing transmission alignments). Therefore, the incremental change to the existing visual quality from the proposed substation modifications would be low. In conjunction with the low visual sensitivity of the Moorpark Substation site, impacts would be less than significant.

Segment 2

The alignment within Segment 2 is within an existing SCE transmission ROW and would include the installation of two TSP foundations, four TSPs, the upper portion of one TSP, and approximately 5 miles of conductor on new and existing TSPs on the south and east sides of SCE's existing Moorpark-Ormond Beach 220 kV ROW. Viewers primarily affected in this portion of the Proposed Project would include motorists along SR 118, Santa Rosa Road, and local roads; nearby residents; and recreationalists using Santa Rosa Valley Park, Wildwood Park Open Space area, and the Conejo Canyons Open Space. (Motorists traveling along SR 23 would not be affected by the Proposed Project due to distance, short durations of time viewed, and intervening vegetation and topography.) As shown in Photos 1 through 8b on Figures 5.1-2, 5.1-3, and 5.1-4, existing views encompass existing transmission structures, including wood poles, steel portal-type towers, steel poles, and lattice towers.

Figure 5.1-5 presents an existing view and visual simulation of the Proposed Project as seen from SR 118 where Segment 2 crosses the road, looking west. Existing electricity infrastructure is prominent in this viewshed. An existing wood pole communication line is located on the south side of the road, and subtransmission lines are located on the north side of the road. Transmission

conductor traverses the road, and a portal-type transmission structure and TSP are located on the south side of the road. The Proposed Project would result in installation of conductor on the existing TSP. As shown in the visual simulation, the placement of the conductor would follow the same lines created by the conductor on the portal-type transmission line. As shown in the simulation, the additional conductor installed as part of the Proposed Project would be nearly imperceptible to motorists traveling on SR 118, and Proposed Project components would not substantially alter the intrinsic character or composition of the existing view. Given the moderate-high visual sensitivity of SR 118 and the low degree of visual change, impacts would be adverse but not significant (see Table 5.1-3).

Figure 5.1-6 presents an existing view and visual simulation of the Proposed Project as seen from Santa Rosa Road where Segment 2 crosses the road, looking west. In this viewshed, an existing wood pole distribution line and steel portal-type transmission line are located on the south side of the road. The Proposed Project would install a TSP and conductor just south of Santa Rosa Road (pole location 24, shown in Figure 3-6). As shown in the visual simulation, the placement of the TSP would be immediately adjacent to the portal-type towers, on the east side of the existing alignment. The TSP would have a simpler, more streamlined profile than the portal-type towers. The new TSP would have a weak to moderate visual contrast, as it would be visible but would not dominate the landscape. The TSP would not block views of aesthetic features in the viewshed, or substantially alter the intrinsic character or composition of the existing view. The overall visual change would be low. In conjunction with the moderate visual sensitivity of Santa Rosa Road, impacts would be adverse but not significant.

Figure 5.1-7 presents an existing view and visual simulation of the Proposed Project as seen from Santa Rosa Road at Hill Canyon Road, looking southwest. The viewer would be approximately 0.5 mile away from the Proposed Project, placing the Proposed Project in the foreground/midground. In this viewshed, the existing portal-type tower transmission line transitions to a lattice-tower type transmission line as it climbs in elevation. Low growing crops and an existing wood-pole electrical line are in the foreground, on the south side of the road. The Proposed Project would result in the installation of TSPs and conductor parallel to the east side of the existing portal-type/lattice tower type transmission line. The TSPs would have a simpler, more streamlined profile than the portal-type and lattice-type towers, and would not be immediately apparent due to distance and as details become indiscernible. The proposed subtransmission line would result in an incremental visual effect change to the viewshed, as the new TSPs and conductor would be nearly imperceptible, with no visual contrast. They would be fully subordinate to other features in the landscape, and would not block or substantially alter the intrinsic character or composition of the existing view. Overall visual change would be low. In conjunction with the moderate visual sensitivity of Santa Rosa Road, impacts would be adverse but not significant.

Figure 5.1-8 presents an existing view and visual simulation of the Proposed Project as seen from Santa Rosa Valley Park, looking northwest. The viewer would be approximately 0.3 mile away from the Proposed Project, placing the Proposed Project in the foreground. Viewers currently experience views of the Santa Rosa Valley and hills beyond, creating a landscape that is made up of

a variety of textures, and includes agricultural crops, orchards, roads, scattered buildings, naturally vegetated hillsides, and rugged mountains in the background. A portal-type transmission line is in the middle of the view. As shown in the visual simulation, the Proposed Project would result in the installation of TSPs and conductor, which would parallel the existing portal-type transmission line on the east side. The TSPs would have a simpler, more streamlined profile than the portal-type and lattice-type towers. From this distance, the new conductor would be imperceptible. The new TSPs, although visible, would be immediately adjacent to the portal-type and lattice-type towers, which would minimize the introduction of additional industrial components in the viewshed. The new TSPs would be visible, but would not attract attention, resulting in weak visual contrast. They would not dominate the landscape, or block or impair views of aesthetic features due to their position and scale. The Proposed Project would result in a low degree of visual change. Despite the high visual sensitivity of Santa Rosa Valley Park, impacts would be adverse but not significant.

Segment 3

The alignment within Segment 3 is within an existing SCE transmission ROW and would include the installation of eight TSP foundations, 13 double-circuit TSPs, and approximately 2 miles of conductor on the new Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line. In addition, it would include reconductoring 2 miles of the Moorpark-Newbury-Pharmacy 66 kV Subtransmission Line. Both of these subtransmission lines would be collocated on the new double-circuit TSPs. The Proposed Project would also remove 14 existing LSTs along this 2-mile segment. Viewers in this area would be limited to recreationalists using the trail system in the Conejo Canyons Open Space area, although trails with views of Segment 3 are limited. As shown in Figure 5.1-4, Photo 8b, electricity-related infrastructure is prominent in existing views, including LSTs and LWS poles, conductor, and access roads. Although the Proposed Project would result in the installation of new TSPs and conductor, it would remove LSTs. This exchange would not alter the intrinsic character or composition of the existing view. The visual contrast would be weak, and Proposed Project elements would be visible but would not demand attention, dominate the landscape, or block views of scenic features. Despite the high visual sensitivity of the Conejo Canyons Open Space area, the overall visual change would be low and the associated impacts would be adverse but not significant.

Segment 4 and Newbury Substation

The alignment within Segment 4 is within an existing SCE transmission ROW and would include the installation of approximately 1 mile of conductor for the new Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line, to be collocated with the Moorpark-Newbury-Pharmacy 66 kV Subtransmission Line on previously installed LWS poles into Newbury Substation. In addition, four TSP foundations, four TSPs, two LWS poles, and a new 66 kV subtransmission line position would be installed, and six wood poles would be removed at Newbury Substation. The existing subtransmission, distribution, and telecommunications facilities would be transferred onto the new TSPs and LWS poles. Viewers in this area would include recreationalists in the Conejo Canyons Open Space and surrounding trails in the City of Thousand Oaks, as well as residents, motorists, on local roads, and employees at nearby commercial buildings.

As shown in Photos 10 and 11 on Figure 5.1-4, electricity-related infrastructure is prominent in existing views, including LSTs and LWS poles, conductor, and access roads. Figure 5.1-9 presents an existing view and visual simulation of the Proposed Project as seen from a trail located within the Conejo Canyons Open Space area, approximately 1,000 feet north of North Wendy Drive. The Proposed Project would be in the foreground as viewed from this location. In these photos the Proposed Project travels north (away from the viewpoint) for approximately 0.4 mile. The Proposed Project would result in the installation of conductor on existing LWS poles in the ROW. As shown in the visual simulation, this change would not be immediately perceptible to the common viewer. The visual contrast would be none, as the element contrast is not visible. The proposed conductor would not alter the intrinsic character or composition of the existing view. Despite the high visual sensitivity of the Conejo Canyons Open Space area, the overall visual change would be low and the associated impacts would be adverse but not significant.

Changes within Newbury Substation, especially if a large number of trees are removed, could be visible from local roads; however, these minor equipment improvements would be generally imperceptible to viewers. Furthermore, because the new equipment would be of the same nature as the existing facilities, it would blend in with the existing view which includes not only the substation facilities, but also existing electricity infrastructure not related to the Proposed Project (e.g., existing subtransmission alignments). Proposed Project components would result in a weak visual contrast, would be subordinate in the viewshed to existing features, and would not block or impair scenic qualities visible from the Conejo Canyons Open Space, local roads, or residences. Therefore, this incremental change to the existing visual quality from the proposed alignment and substation modifications would result in a low degree of visual change. Despite the high visual sensitivity of the Conejo Canyons Open Space area, given the low degree of visual change, overall impacts from Segment 4 would be less than significant.

The north/south portion of Segment 4, in which conductor would be installed, could also be visible from U.S. 101, from a distance ranging from approximately 0.5 mile to 1 mile. However, Proposed Project elements would be generally obscured by intervening vegetation, topography, and structures. In addition, the conductor would be generally imperceptible to motorists because of the distance between motorists and Proposed Project components, the speed with which motorists would be traveling on the highway, and the position and scale of the conductor. There would be no visual contrast, view blockage or impairment. Given the low-moderate visual sensitivity of U.S. 101, the resulting impact would be not significant.

Mitigation: None required.

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Impact 5.1-6: If night lighting is required during construction, the Proposed Project could adversely affect nighttime views in the Proposed Project area. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II)

Construction activities would normally occur during daylight hours (7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.), minimizing the need for lighting. However, night construction activity may be required. If night construction is required, temporary lighting would likely be required for security and safety reasons at the Proposed Project facilities, including the staging areas and pull/tension sites. Night lighting could potentially result in impacts to visual resources by increasing ambient light to surrounding areas, creating distracting glare, and reducing sky or star visibility. Nearby land uses, including residences and businesses, provide some lighting of their own. However, a large portion of the Proposed Project would be located in a relatively undeveloped area with features that would result in increased lighting contrast when compared to the lighted developed areas. Therefore, nighttime lighting could have a potentially significant impact to nighttime views in the Proposed Project vicinity. With implementation of Mitigation Measure 5.1-6, which requires a *Construction Lighting Mitigation Plan* with the use of shielded lighting elements, directed fixtures, and motion or timing sensors, this impact would be reduced to less than significant.

Mitigation Measure 5.1-6: SCE shall design and install all lighting at Project facilities, including construction and storage yards and staging areas, such that light bulbs and reflectors are not visible from public viewing areas; lighting does not cause reflected glare; and illumination of the project facilities, vicinity, and nighttime sky is minimized. SCE shall submit a *Construction Lighting Mitigation Plan* to the CPUC for review and approval at least 90 days prior to the start of construction or the ordering of any exterior lighting fixtures or components, whichever comes first. SCE shall not order any exterior lighting fixtures or components until the *Construction Lighting Mitigation Plan* is approved by the CPUC. The Plan shall include but is not limited to the following measures:

- Lighting shall be designed so exterior lighting is hooded, with lights directed downward or toward the area to be illuminated and so that backscatter to the nighttime sky is minimized. The design of the lighting shall be such that the luminescence or light sources are shielded to prevent light trespass outside the Project boundary.
- All lighting shall be of minimum necessary brightness consistent with worker safety.
- High illumination areas not occupied on a continuous basis shall have switches or motion detectors to light the area only when occupied.

Significant after mitigation: Less than significant.

Impact 5.1-7: The Proposed Project could create new sources of glare. *Less than significant* (Class III)

The Proposed Project would introduce new poles and overhead conductors into viewsheds, which could be a noticeable visual change as seen from some viewing locations during the daytime. However, as described in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, new conductor would be non-specular, and new poles would have a dulled, galvanized finish. As such, the Proposed Project would not result in a new source of glare, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation: None required.

5.1.5 Alternatives

No Project Alternative 1

Under No Project Alternative 1, no new facilities would be constructed, and existing facilities would not be altered, expanded, or demolished. Implementation of this alternative would not affect scenic vistas, scenic resources, or the existing visual character of the surrounding area, and would not create any additional source of light or glare (No Impact).

No Project Alternative 2

Under No Project Alternative 2, the Proposed Project would not be constructed and infrastructure already constructed for the Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission line would be removed, with the exception of the previously installed LWS poles and energized conductor. Construction impacts associated with No Project Alternative 2 would be similar to those of the Proposed Project because this alternative would require construction activities within the same SCE ROW to remove 22 TSPs, the base section of one additional TSP, 30 TSP foundations, and slurry from three foundation holes. Like the Proposed Project, impacts to scenic vistas (Impact 5.1-1) would be less than significant (Class III), and No Project Alternative 2 would have no impact regarding criterion b) because it would not damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway (No Impact). Impacts from the use of temporary staging areas and laydown areas (Impact 5.1-2), and stringing sites (Impact 5.1-3), would be less than significant with implementation of Mitigation Measures 5.1-2a and 5.1-2b (Class II). Visual impacts from vegetation clearance (Impact 5.1-4) would be less than significant (Class III). For operations and maintenance (Impact 5.1-5), No Project Alternative 2 would remove industrial structures (i.e., TSPs) from open space areas and other scenic landscapes in Segment 2. This would create a beneficial impact on the environment (Class IV). Like the Proposed Project, No Project Alternative 2 require Mitigation Measure 5.1-6 if night lighting were necessary (Impact 5.1-6), and would not create a significant new source of glare (Impact 5.1-7, Class III).

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