**To:** **State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Property Owners & Interested Parties**

**From:** **Ms. Tharon Wright, CPUC Project Manager**

**Subject:** **NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP) OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING FOR THE POWER SANTA CLARA VALLEY PROJECT (A.24-04-017)**

**Date:** **September 6, 2024**

## INTRODUCTION

LS Power Grid California (LSPGC) filed a certificate of public convenience and necessity (CPCN) application (A.24-04-017) with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for its proposed Power Santa Clara Valley Project (Project). The Project was approved by the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) to ensure the reliability of the area's CAISO-controlled grid. As such, the Project's stated purpose is to strengthen the electrical grid in the South Bay sub-area of the Greater Bay Area. The CPUC, as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to analyze the effects of the proposed Project in compliance with CEQA. The CPUC has reviewed the application submitted on April 29, 2024, and deemed the application complete on June 27, 2024. In order to obtain early feedback on the environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR, the CPUC is initiating the scoping process to inform the CEQA review with a scoping period from September 6 through October 7, 2024.

## PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING NOTICE

A hybrid Zoom meeting will be held Wednesday, September 18, 2024

| **Meeting Information** | **Scoping Meeting** |
|---|---|
| Day and Date | Wednesday, September 18, 2024 |
| Time | 6:00 pm |
| Location | Santa Teresa Branch Library Community Room<br>290 International Circle<br>San Jose, CA 95119 |
| Attend virtually by | Zoom Link: https://bit.ly/PSCVPScopingMtg<br>or by phone: (888) 788-0099<br>Webinar ID: 893 0273 0565 |

**What is Scoping?**

The purpose of this NOP is to inform recipients that the CPUC is beginning the scoping process and preparing an EIR for the Project. Scoping is the process of soliciting public and agency input regarding the scope and content of an EIR, in advance of its preparation. Pursuant to CEQA, the CPUC is requesting comments to inform the scope and content of the EIR and help identify the actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and environmental effects to be analyzed in the EIR.

This notice includes a brief description of the Project, a brief summary of the anticipated potential impacts, information on public meetings, and how to provide input on the scope and content of the EIR. After the public scoping period has ended, a Scoping Report will be prepared to summarize the comments received. This NOP and the Scoping Report will be included as an appendix to the EIR and is also available on the CPUC's website for the Project with other Project documents and reports, including LSPGC's application and Proponent's Environmental Assessment, at the following link:

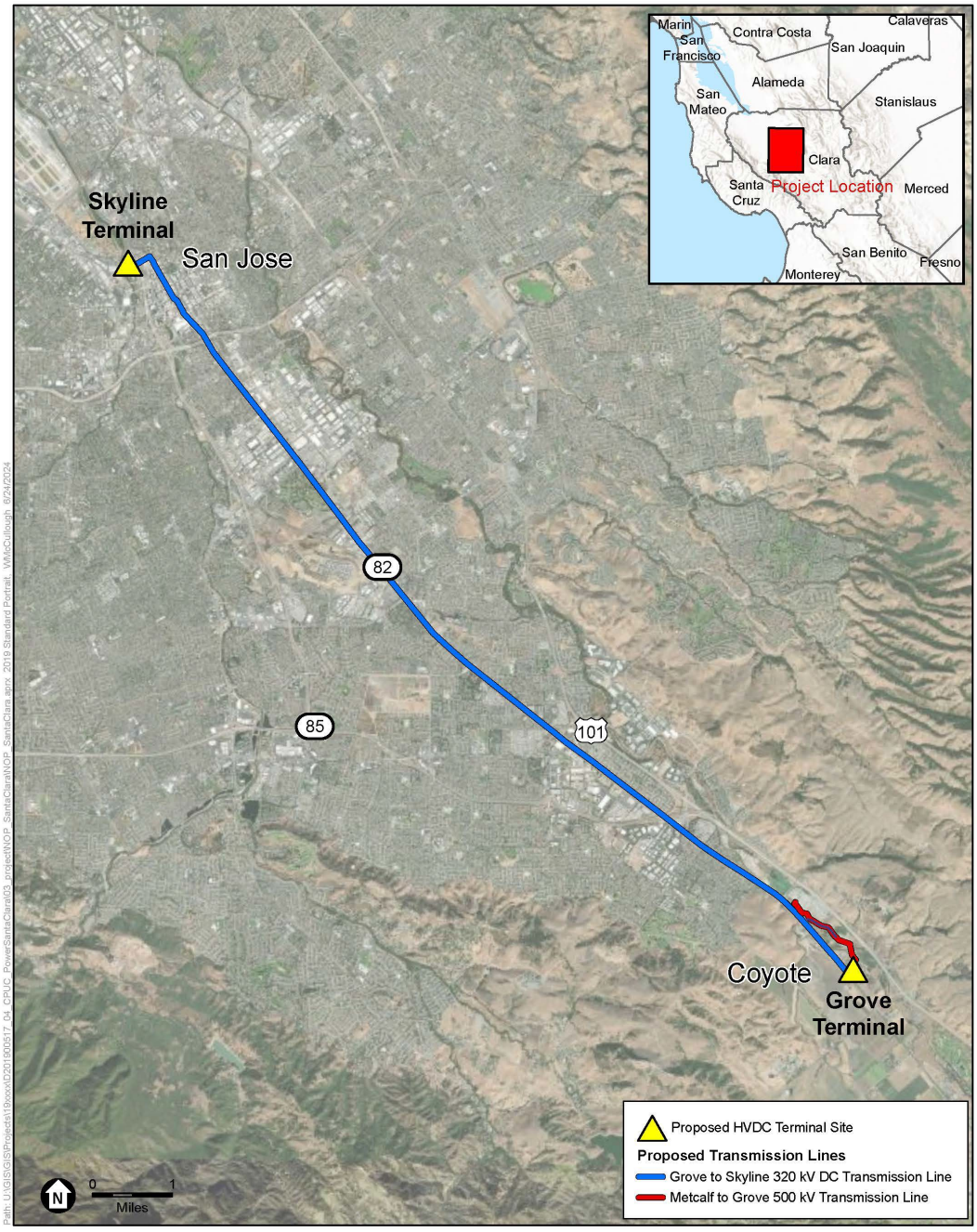
https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/esa/pscv/index.html

## PROJECT LOCATION

The Project would be located in the City of San José, and unincorporated Santa Clara County. **Figure 1**, *Project Location*, depicts an overview of the Project in the context of regional jurisdictions.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project would include two new high-voltage direct current (HVDC) terminals and associated new transmission lines. The new transmission lines would include an approximately 13-mile Grove to Skyline 320 kilovolt (kV) direct current (DC) underground transmission line connecting the southern terminal, the Grove terminal, to the northern terminal, the Skyline terminal; an approximately 100-foot overhead Skyline to San José B 115 kV alternating current (AC) station tie line connecting the new Skyline terminal to the existing Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) San José B substation; and an approximately 1.2 mile Metcalf to Grove 500 kV underground transmission line connecting the new Grove terminal to the existing PG&E Metcalf substation. The Project would be located in the City of San José and unincorporated Santa Clara County. The application includes the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA) prepared pursuant to Rule 2.4 of the CPUC's Rules of Practice and Procedure. The proposed Project was approved by the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) to ensure the reliability of the CAISO-controlled grid. This would be accomplished through the construction of two new high-voltage direct current (HVDC) terminals and a new HVDC transmission line connecting the terminals.




SOURCE: LS Power, 2024

CPUC Power Santa Clara Valley

**Figure 1**
Project Location

ESA

### Applicant Proposed Measures

As part of the Project, LSPGC has committed to implementing applicant proposed measures (APMs) that are incorporated into the design of the Project. APMs are considered binding measures, and the EIR will evaluate these measures as part of the Project.

## ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

CPUC has determined that an EIR will be prepared because the Project could result in one or more significant impacts to environmental resources. The EIR will address all of the issues identified in the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. However, it is anticipated that the Project would have nominal or no impacts to the following resource areas: land use, minerals, population and housing, and wildfire.

### Environmental Effects

LSPGC, in its PEA, has not identified any potentially significant or significant and unavoidable impacts associated with the Project. The EIR will independently and objectively evaluate potential environmental effects and the need for mitigation on the following resource areas:

- ***Aesthetics***: The Project area is predominantly urban in nature and would primarily be located within disturbed urban, developed and agricultural lands. The proposed terminals would be visible from segments of the Guadalupe River trail and Coyote Creek trail. Project components would also be visible by motorists traveling on SR-87 and Monterey Road. The EIR will evaluate the potential for substantial adverse impacts to scenic vistas, scenic resources, and the existing visual character or quality of public views, and the effects of new sources of light and glare.
- ***Agricultural Resources:*** The Project site for the Grove terminal is located on Prime Farmland. The EIR will evaluate the effect of converting agricultural land for utility infrastructure.
- ***Air Quality:*** It is not anticipated that the Project would exceed any of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District thresholds of significance. The Project area would be located near residential sensitive receptors. The EIR will evaluate the potential for the Project to conflict with or obstruct implementation of an applicable air quality plan, result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard, expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, or result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people.
- ***Biological Resources:*** The Project area is predominantly urban in nature and would primarily be located within disturbed urban, developed and agricultural lands. The EIR will evaluate the potential for substantial adverse impacts to sensitive vegetation communities, species, and habitats identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by CDFW or USFWS, including wetlands and riparian habitat. The EIR will also evaluate the Project's potential for effects on special-status and migratory species, conflicts with local policies or ordinances and habitat that protect biological resources, conflicts with local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans, and the potential for the project to create a substantial collision risk for birds and bats.

- ***Cultural Resources:*** There are known historical and archaeological resources, and known resources associated with human remains located within the Project area. Earthmoving and other ground-disturbing activities could result in the inadvertent discovery of cultural resources. The EIR will evaluate the potential for an adverse change in the significance of cultural resources and the potential for the Project to disturb human remains.
- ***Energy:*** The EIR will evaluate the potential for the Project to result in a significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during Project construction or operation.
- ***Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources:*** The Project is located within 10 miles of the Calaveras Fault Zone, Hayward Fault Zone, Sargent Fault Zone and Monte Vista Fault Zone, all of which are deemed active or potentially active faults. The Grove to Skyline 320kV DC transmission alignment would intersect with the inactive Coyote Creek Faultline. The Project would result in soil disturbance on lands deemed to have moderate soil erosion potential. The EIR will evaluate the potential for the Project to directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure including liquefaction, and landslides. The EIR will also evaluate the Project's potential to result in substantial soil erosion, or landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse; and the Project's potential effects on paleontological resources.
- ***Greenhouse Gas Emissions:*** The EIR will evaluate the Project's potential to generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment, and the Project's potential conflict with a plan, policy, or regulation adopted to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- ***Hazards, Hazardous Materials, and Public Safety:*** Construction of the Project would require the transportation, use and disposal of hazardous materials including treated wood poles, mineral oil, gasoline, lead-acid batteries, hydraulic fluids, solvents and ethylene glycol. Contaminated soil and groundwater have been identified at facilities near the Project alignments and have the potential to be encountered during construction. Contaminated soil and groundwater have also been identified at the Skyline Terminal Site. The EIR will evaluate the potential for the Project to create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials; or a reasonably foreseeable accident.
- ***Hydrology and Water Quality:*** The Project is located within the Coyote Creek watershed and lies within the Santa Clara Valley Groundwater Basin, Santa Clara Subbasin. The inactive Coyote Alamitos Canal, Fisher Creek, Coyote Canal, and Coyote Creek are located within the Project area. The EIR will evaluate the potential for the Project to substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality, impede sustainable groundwater management, substantially alter existing drainage patterns, risk release of pollutants due to flooding, or conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.
- ***Noise:*** The EIR will evaluate whether the Project would result in exposure of persons to, or generation of, noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies and the potential for construction to generate excessive ground-borne vibration.

- ***Recreation:*** The Guadalupe River Park and trail, and Ryland Parkway Trail are recreational resources located within or adjacent to the Skyline terminal site. The Coyote Creek trail, Coyote Creek Parkway, Santa Clara County Fairgrounds, Cadwallader Park, Parque de los Pobladores and Cesar Chaves Park are located adjacent to the proposed Grove to Skyline transmission line alignment. The Coyote Creek trail and Coyote Creek Parkway are located within the Metcalf to Grove transmission line alignment, and the Coyote Creek trail, Coyote Creek Parkway, and Butterfield Overland National Historic Trail are located adjacent to the proposed Grove terminal site. The Project would not include the construction or expansion of a recreational area or facility. The EIR will evaluate impacts the Project may have on recreational resources.
- ***Traffic and Transportation:*** The Project could result in the temporary closure of bicycle lanes, pedestrian walkways, transit stops, and roadways during construction. The EIR will evaluate the potential for the Project to conflict with any program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities; create potentially hazardous conditions for people walking, bicycling, or driving or for public transit operations; generate vehicle miles traveled; and result in inadequate emergency access.
- ***Tribal Cultural Resources:*** The EIR will evaluate the Project's potential effects on tribal cultural resources.
- ***Utilities and Service Systems:*** The Project could require the relocation of existing utilities located within close proximity to the proposed terminal sites and transmission lines. Utility relocation could include sanitary sewer, stormwater, gas, water, electric and telecommunication. Modification of the Metcalf Substation could require removal of the well water system and fire water system that serves the substation and PG&E General Contractor Yard. The EIR will evaluate the potential for the Project to result in new or expanded utility facilities that are not identified as part of the Project, which could cause significant environmental effects.

## Mitigation Measures, Cumulative Impacts, and Alternatives

The EIR will include CPUC's independent evaluation of the potential effects described above and other potentially significant environmental effects of the Project, including those resulting from its construction, operation, and maintenance. Where necessary and feasible, mitigation measures will be recommended (in addition to or to supersede LSPGC APMs) to avoid or reduce potentially significant impacts. The EIR will also address potential cumulative environmental impacts of the Project, when considered with past, other current, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the region.

The EIR will include a discussion and analysis of a reasonable range of alternatives to the Project, including a No Project alternative scenario, and alternatives to the Project that could attain most of its basic CEQA objectives while avoiding or reducing any of its significant environmental effects. LSPGC has identified several alternatives in its PEA, including four Grove terminal site alternatives; two Skyline terminal site alternatives; four Grove to Skyline 320 kV DC transmission line route alternatives; four downtown San Jose alternatives; five Metcalf to Grove 500kV AC transmission line route alternative; one technology alternative; and one No Project alternative. These will be considered by the CPUC's environmental review team and potentially carried forward for full analysis in the EIR. Other alternatives may be added to the analysis based on input received during the 30-day scoping period following issuance

of this NOP, or by the EIR team to reduce or eliminate potentially significant environmental impacts identified during the EIR process.

### Public Resources Code Section 21092.6(a)

Per Public Resources Code Section 21092.6(a), if the Project site or site of any project alternative to be analyzed is a site listed on the "Cortese list" of hazardous waste site, then this information must be included in the NOP. According to LSPGC, pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, there is one site within the Project area that is included on the Cortese list of hazardous waste sites – College Park Parcel 2 Site. The Skyline terminal Project component would be located on the College Park Parcel 2 site. The proposed San Jose B Substation overlaps with the proposed Skyline terminal site which is located on the College Park Parcel 2 site.

## ISSUES THAT WILL NOT BE ADDRESSED IN THE EIR

Non-environmental issues such as economic impacts and assessment of Project need are outside the scope of CEQA and will not be addressed in the EIR, but those issues may be addressed through the CPUC's concurrent proceeding for the Project. The EIR will also not consider electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) that would be generated by the Project in the context of the CEQA analysis of potential environmental impacts, for two reasons: (1) There is no agreement among scientists that EMFs create a potential health risk; and (2) there are no defined or adopted CEQA standards for defining health risk from EMFs.

## PUBLIC SCOPING PERIOD FOR THIS NOTICE OF PREPARATION

Information to be included in the EIR will be based in part on input and comments received during the scoping period. Decision-makers, responsible and trustee agencies under CEQA, property owners, and members of the public will also have an opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR once it is issued. Pursuant to CEQA, the scoping period will be 30 days following the release of this NOP. The scoping period for this Project begins on Friday, September 6, 2024, and closes at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, October 7, 2024. Please include the name, organization (if applicable), mailing address, and e-mail address of the contact person for all future notifications related to this process. Public comments will become part of the public record and will be published in a Scoping Report.

Please send your comments by mail or e-mail to:

**Tharon Wright, CPUC**
**Power Santa Clara Valley Project**
**c/o Environmental Science Associates; Attn. V. Nez**
**180 Grand Avenue, Suite 1050, Oakland, CA 94612;**
**or via e-mail: PowerSCV@esassoc.com**

## SCOPING MEETINGS

In order for the public and regulatory agencies to have an opportunity to submit comments on the scope of the EIR for the Project, a hybrid (in-person and online) meeting will be held on September 18, 2024, during the NOP scoping period. Information about the hybrid meeting is included in the table below. For the first

half hour of the meeting, CPUC will host a workshop to clarify a) the CPUC's process for reviewing the application; b) the environmental review process; and c) details on how the public can become involved with each of these processes. Following the workshop, the CPUC will hold the official scoping meeting beginning with a brief presentation providing an overview of the Project and alternatives identified to date. Following this presentation, agencies and the public will have an opportunity to provide verbal comments to inform the scope of the environmental review. Written comments will be accepted throughout the NOP scoping period to the address and/or email. A QR code to join either meeting is also provided. Spanish interpretation services will be provided during the meeting, both in-person and online. Advanced notice for Spanish interpretation needs is preferred, but not required. Advanced notice can be sent to Tharon Wright at Tharon.Wright@cpuc.ca.gov.

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