

Riverside Transmission Reliability Project

Frequently Asked Questions

REVISED PROJECT

What is the Riverside Transmission Reliability Project?

Southern California Edison (SCE) and the City of Riverside's Municipal Utility Department (RPU) jointly planned the Riverside Transmission Reliability Project (RTRP). The RTRP would be owned and operated by both SCE and RPU. SCE's project elements provide the infrastructure required to deliver electricity to the City of Riverside. RPU's project elements are required to distribute the electricity within the City of Riverside. The City of Riverside prepared and certified an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in 2013 and approved the RPU-owned elements.

Why did the CPUC prepare another Environmental Impact Report for the RTRP?

Following certification of the 2013 RTRP EIR, SCE revised the transmission line route to avoid conflicts with residential and commercial developments within SCE's proposed transmission line route in the City of Jurupa Valley. The environmental effects of these project revisions had not been analyzed in the 2013 EIR. Environmental review was required to identify and mitigate new or increased impacts that were not identified in the 2013 RTRP EIR. The Revised Project elements were analyzed in the CPUC's Subsequent EIR.

What is the Revised Project?

The Subsequent EIR analyzes the changes to the RTRP that occurred after the City of Riverside certified the EIR in 2013. These changes are referred to as the "Revised Project" in the Subsequent EIR, and include the following components:

- Construction of approximately 2 miles of 230-kV underground double-circuit duct bank, which was previously proposed as overhead transmission line. The underground duct bank would be constructed primarily within Pats Ranch Road and 68th Street in the City of Jurupa Valley.
- Relocation of the proposed overhead 230-kV transmission line route to the west side of Wineville Avenue. The purpose of relocating the overhead transmission line is to avoid conflicts with housing developments on the east side of Wineville Avenue.
- Relocation of existing overhead distribution lines to underground duct banks or different overhead locations in two locations to accommodate the new 230-kV transmission line.
- Temporary use of a marshalling yard on Etiwanda Avenue to store construction materials during construction.

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Why is the Revised Project analyzed in the Subsequent EIR instead of the entire Proposed Project?

The CPUC is the next agency, after the City of Riverside, that must consider whether to issue a permit for the RTRP. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) specifies that a Subsequent EIR should be prepared when a new significant environmental effect or a substantial increase in severity of a previously identified significant effect would result from substantial changes proposed in a project or baseline conditions.

Only the impacts resulting from the proposed project changes or change in circumstances not analyzed in the original environmental 2013 RTRP EIR are at issue and must be evaluated in the Subsequent EIR. As such, the Revised Project has been analyzed in the Subsequent EIR because the other unchanged components of the Proposed Project were adequately analyzed in the 2013 RTRP EIR and further analysis is not required. The Proposed Project was reanalyzed under a few environmental resource topics (e.g., Air Quality and Tribal Cultural Resources) due to changed circumstances.

Why is the RTRP needed?

The purpose of the RTRP is to:

- Increase capacity to meet existing electrical system demand and anticipated future load growths
- Provide additional source of bulk power into the RPU electrical system.

I received a comment letter from the Riverside County Parks and Open Space District. Why does the District refer to the Draft and Final EIRs prepared by the City of Riverside and not the CPUC's Draft Subsequent EIR?

The Riverside County Parks and Open Space District letter refers impacts on Hidden Valley Wildlife Preserve (Preserve) that were analyzed in the Draft and Final EIRs (the Subsequent EIR refers to these documents as the 2013 RTRP EIR). These are the appropriate documents to reference for information on impacts on the Preserve. The CPUC's Draft Subsequent EIR analyzes the impacts from (1) the elements of SCE's project that have changed since the certification of the 2013 RTRP EIR and (2) changes in baseline conditions since the time that the City of Riverside certified the 2013 RTRP EIR. There have been no changes to the project alignment or baseline conditions in the Preserve and the CPUC's Subsequent EIR does not re-analyze impacts for project elements where there is no change in circumstances (baseline conditions or project modification) since the certification of the 2013 RTRP EIR.

DRAFT SUBSEQUENT EIR

What kind of information is included in the Draft Subsequent EIR?

The Draft Subsequent EIR includes:

- A description of the Revised Project
- Description of the existing environment of the Revised Project
- Analysis of the environmental impacts of the Revised Project
- Analysis of alternatives to the Revised Project that would reduce or avoid effects
- Cumulative impacts of the Revised Project in combination with other present and planned projects in the area

What is the purpose of the Subsequent EIR?

The purpose of the Draft Subsequent EIR is to inform decision-makers and the public about the environmental impacts associated with the Revised Project, and identify mitigation measures.

Who is the decision-maker for the project?

The CPUC is the state Lead Agency under CEQA and the Final Subsequent EIR will be used to inform the CPUC's decision as to whether to issue a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to SCE to construct and operate the RTRP. The CPUC may approve the Proposed Project, which includes the Revised Project, approve one of the alternatives, or deny SCE's proposal.

What other agencies are involved?

Responsible Agencies (e.g., California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board) will also use this Subsequent EIR in their permitting processes.

How can the public participate in the Subsequent EIR process?

The first opportunity to participate in the Subsequent EIR process was during the 30-day scoping phase of the project (January 25, 2017 through February 24, 2017). The next opportunity to participate in the process is the commenting on the Draft Subsequent EIR. The public comment period for the Draft Subsequent EIR lasts 45 days, beginning when the CPUC published the Draft Subsequent EIR on April 2, 2018, and comments on the Draft Subsequent EIR will be accepted through May 17, 2018. The CPUC will respond to public comments on the Draft Subsequent EIR in the Final Subsequent EIR.

How can the public comment on the Draft Subsequent EIR?

The public may comment on the Draft Subsequent EIR in any of the following ways:

- Submit written comments at the informational workshops
- Mail comments to:
Riverside Transmission Reliability Project
717 Market Street, Suite 650
San Francisco, CA 94103

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- Submit comments via email at riversidertrp@panoramaenv.com
- Submit comments by fax to (650) 373-1211

All comments on the Draft Subsequent EIR must be postmarked or received by May 17, 2018.

Who should I contact with questions about the project that are not related to the environmental review?

Questions that are outside of the scope of environmental review, such as questions about project costs or property values, should be directed to the CPUC Public Advisor's Office. Contact information for the Public Advisor's Office can be found on the CPUC website at: <http://consumers.cpuc.ca.gov/pao/>

Where can I find more information about the RTRP and the environmental review process for the project?

The CPUC project website includes more information about the environmental review process for the RTRP. The 2013 RTRP EIR prepared by the City of Riverside can also be viewed on this website. The CPUC project website can be accessed at: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/Environment/info/panoramaenv/RTRP/>

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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

What are the main visual impacts of the Revised Project?

Installation of the riser poles and overhead 230 kV transmission line would degrade the scenic quality of views from local roadways, parks, and recreational areas resulting in long-term impacts on aesthetics. Mitigation options, such as vegetative screening or color treatment of facilities, are either infeasible or have the potential to cause greater contrast with existing transmission infrastructure. Long-term visual impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

Would it be possible to underground the entire Revised Project?

Alternatives 1 and 2 include extending the underground transmission line from Limonite Avenue to Wineville Avenue within the streets of Jurupa Valley. These alternatives result in all elements of the Revised Project being constructed to be underground.

Would it be possible to underground the entire Proposed Project transmission line?

At this time, it is unknown whether undergrounding the entire Proposed Project transmission line would be feasible. Underground construction within the Santa Ana River Corridor, including the Hidden Valley Wildlife Preserve, would likely result in substantially greater environmental impact than the overhead transmission line. The CPUC screened 30 alternatives during the preparation of the Subsequent EIR. Alternative 8 consists of undergrounding the entire 10-mile alignment and was rejected from further analysis because it would cause substantially greater environmental impact in comparison to the Revised Project. The Alternatives Screening Report (Appendix D of the Draft Subsequent EIR) provides screening details for all 30 alternatives considered by the CPUC.

What will be the height of the overhead transmission poles and towers?

The Revised Project overhead transmission line segment would include two tubular steel poles and three lattice steel towers within Wineville Avenue and along I-15. The tubular steel poles would range from 90 to 170 feet tall; and the lattice steel towers would range from 115 to 120 feet tall. Two riser poles would be constructed at either end of the underground transmission line. The riser poles would be 165 feet tall.

Will the Revised Project damage agricultural land?

Construction activities would convert important farmland to nonagricultural use if the impacted soils were not restored following construction, resulting in a short-term impact. The short-term impact would be reduced to less than significant with implementation of mitigation requiring SCE to restore the soil profile of farmland impacted during construction to pre-construction conditions.

Long-term impacts on agricultural land would occur due to the permanent conversion of important farmland to nonagricultural use from the presence of overhead 230-kV transmission

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line poles and towers. Mitigation would be implemented that requires SCE to compensate for the loss of agricultural lands caused by the Revised Project at a ratio of 1:1.

Why does the Air Quality analysis address the Proposed Project?

The air quality analysis considered the whole of the Proposed Project, whereas other resource topic sections focus only on the Revised Project. The CPUC determined that this analysis approach was necessary for air quality because a number of substantial changes have occurred since the time of the 2013 RTRP EIR analysis. These changes have the potential to cause new significant impacts for the Proposed Project which include:

- New air quality modeling methodology
- Changes in background pollutant concentrations since the analysis in the 2013 RTRP EIR
- Construction locations have changed and are closer to sensitive receptors
- Construction schedule now includes concurrent construction activities
- Types of construction activity proposed

Will the Revised Project degrade air quality?

Construction of the Proposed Project would generate air pollutant emissions from construction vehicles and equipment and fugitive dust from surface disturbance. The emissions would increase ambient concentrations of several pollutants in proximity to sensitive receptors; the emissions would exceed the South Coast Air Quality Management District significance thresholds. Mitigation requiring preparation and implementation of a Fugitive Dust Control Plan, exhaust emissions controls for worker vehicles and construction equipment, and construction phasing would reduce the impact to a less than significant level.

What impacts on biological resources would occur?

Construction of the Revised Project could impact several special-status wildlife species from direct ground disturbance and vegetation removal as well as indirectly, by impacting suitable habitat, causing erosion and sedimentation, or spilling hazardous materials. Construction would affect riparian habitat, wetlands, and critical habitats for Delhi sands flower-loving fly, south western willow flycatcher, least Bell's vireo, yellow-breasted chat, yellow warbler, and western burrowing owl. Mitigation measures require SCE to comply with the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, manage and control invasive species and weeds, conduct pre-construction surveys for the species not covered by the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, and implement measures to protect those species. These measures would minimize the impacts to less than significant.

Operation of the transmission lines could cause impacts on special-status bird species from electrocution or collision with the lines. Mitigation requiring protection for birds from power lines collisions would reduce the impact to less than significant.

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What impacts from hazards and hazardous materials could occur?

Equipment used for excavation has the potential to rupture or damage buried utility lines or release hazardous materials (i.e., fuel, lubricants) from accidental spills or leaks at staging yards or work sites. Environmental protection elements and mitigation require SCE to notify appropriate utility companies, conduct exploratory excavations to identify and avoid existing utilities, develop and implement a Health and Safety Plan and an Emergency Release Response Plan, and conduct worker training for spill prevention and emergency containment.

How is the power line danger and risk to public safety addressed?

The transmission line would not be energized until after project construction is completed. The public and workers could experience shocks from induced current and voltage from touching an ungrounded conductive object near the Revised Project transmission line during operation. SCE would reduce the risk of shock hazards by identifying the existing conducting objects near the transmission line corridor and incorporating grounding measures for objects that may exceed the maximum touch voltage thresholds.

Will the Revised Project increase the risk of fire?

Project construction activities have the potential to cause localized fires. Mitigation requires SCE to develop and implement a Fire Prevention and Management Plan prior to and during construction. The Fire Prevention and management Plan would identify Proposed Project-specific fire prevention measures, such as permits required, smoking and fire rules, storage and parking areas, welding, and emergency measures. Prior to construction, SCE would also coordinate with Riverside County Fire Department to ensure that construction activities and associated lane closures would not hinder firefighting response pathways or delay response time. The majority of the Revised Project would be constructed either underground or within the suburban setting of Jurupa Valley where vegetation is used predominantly for landscaping. There are no wildlands near the Revised Project alignment and the fire risk within landscaped vegetation is minimal. The risk of fire would be reduced through ongoing vegetation management practices throughout the operation of the project.

Will I be able to hear project construction noise inside my house?

Construction activities would produce noise loud enough to be heard inside homes that are within 300 feet of the construction activity. The loudest construction noise would occur during excavation for the underground vaults and duct banks. Construction would be limited to weekdays during daytime hours in accordance with local noise ordinances.

How long will I hear construction noise?

Noise from active construction could last up to several months. The majority of construction noise would occur during excavation of the underground segment. Trench and vault excavation noise could last a few weeks. Noise from installing the underground infrastructure (i.e., vaults and conduits) and backfilling the trenches would be substantially quieter than excavation activities. These phases could last several weeks in addition to the excavation period.

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Will I hear a buzz from the transmission line during operation of the project?

The overhead transmission line along Wineville Avenue would not generate audible buzzing or crackling sounds, also known as corona noise. The 2013 RTRP EIR analyzed corona noise impacts from the overhead 230-kV transmission line and identified impacts to be less than significant. A corona noise survey of an existing SCE 220-kV transmission line (230-kV capacity) was conducted in 2017 by the CPUC's noise consultant (The RCH Group). The result of the survey supported the 2013 RTRP EIR conclusion, and indicated that corona noise from a 220-kV transmission line would not be audible at 50 feet. The underground transmission line would not generate noise during operation.

Will traffic increase as a result of the Revised Project?

Traffic would temporarily increase during construction on local roadways and at intersections. Underground construction is not permitted during morning and evening rush-hour traffic periods; however, travel times are expected to increase as a result of road and lane closures necessary for underground construction.

Will the Revised Project increase electric and magnetic fields (EMF)?

The CPUC does not consider EMF to be an environmental issue in the context of CEQA because there is no consensus among scientists that EMF creates a health risk, and because CEQA does not define or adopt standards for defining any potential risk from EMF. Appendix C of the Subsequent EIR provides supplemental information regarding EMF associated with electric utility facilities and the potential EMF resulting from the Proposed Project.

Will any trails be closed in the parks and preserves located near the Revised Project?

Temporary trail closures may occur where trails are located in close proximity to construction areas to provide a safety buffer between recreational users and construction areas. Temporary trail detours would be provided where feasible. When temporary trail closures are necessary, on-site notices would be posted prior to the closure.

Did the CPUC consider potential conflicts with other projects that are currently under construction or that might be under construction at the same time as the RTRP?

A list of 27 present and probable future projects were identified and analyzed to determine whether the Revised Project's contribution to any cumulative impacts is considerable after implementation of applicable mitigation. The impact of the cumulative projects on several resources, including aesthetics, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, and traffic, would be significant. The contribution of the Revised Project on cumulative temporary noise and roadway and intersection operation impacts would remain cumulatively considerable even with mitigation.

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ALTERNATIVES

What are alternatives?

CEQA requires that agencies consider alternatives to the project that would meet the basic objectives of the project and avoid or lessen impacts. The Subsequent EIR identifies a reasonable range of alternatives to the project. An intensive alternatives screening process culminated in the identification and preliminary screening of 31 potential alternatives, including the No Project Alternative.

What alternatives were studied in the Draft Subsequent EIR?

Four alternatives, as well as the No Project Alternative, were retained for full analysis in the Subsequent EIR. The alternatives analyzed in the Subsequent EIR are:

- Alternative 1: Bellegrave – Pats Ranch Road Underground
- Alternative 2: Wineville – Limonite Underground
- Alternative 3: Relocate Northern Riser Poles
- Alternative 4: Wineville – Landon Underground
- No Project Alternative

Of the four action alternatives, Alternative 1 is the environmentally superior alternative. It is the preferred alternative for the Revised Project because it substantially reduces the long-term aesthetic impact and eliminates the agricultural impact from the loss of Important Farmland. The alternatives are discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6 of the Subsequent EIR. A detailed description for each of the 30 alternatives, as well as the No Project Alternative, is provided in the Alternatives Screening Report (Appendix D of the Subsequent EIR).

Did the CPUC consider an alternative that avoids Jurupa Valley?

The CPUC considered several alternative routes that would avoid the City of Jurupa Valley. The CPUC also considered several alternatives that would entirely avoid construction of the transmission line. These alternatives include distributed rooftop solar, adding battery storage facilities at existing substations, expansion of the Riverside Energy Resource Center, expansion of the Electrical Equipment at Mountain View Substation, using RPU existing generation during peak periods, increasing energy efficiency and conservation, reducing demand/electricity use during peak periods, and using SCE's existing 66-kV powerline network to provide power to Riverside.

Each of these alternatives was eliminated from further review during the alternatives screening process because they failed to meet project objectives; regulatory, technical, or legal feasibility criteria; or they did not reduce or avoid the significant impacts of the Revised Project. The full range of alternatives are described in the Alternatives Screening Report (Appendix D of the Subsequent EIR).

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I suggested an alternative during the scoping period (January – February 2017). Why didn't the CPUC analyze the alternative I suggested?

The CPUC screened 31 alternatives as part of the Draft Subsequent EIR process. Alternatives that do not meet the project objectives, as well as legal, regulatory, and technical feasibility criteria were screened out from further review. Alternatives that do not reduce or avoid a significant impact of the Revised Project were also eliminated from further review. The full range of alternatives that were screened for the project appear in Chapter 3 of the Subsequent EIR and additional information on the individual screening results for each alternative is provided in the Alternatives Screening Report (Appendix D).

What is the No Project Alternative?

CEQA requires the consideration of the effects of not implementing a project, known as the No Project Alternative. In the No Project Alternative scenario, construction and operation of the RTRP or Alternatives would not occur. In the absence of the RTRP, it is likely that RPU would opt to increase use of gas-fired generation and install battery storage to mitigate the system impact from potential failure of RPU's transformers at Vista Substation, or failure of RPU's transmission line interconnections to Vista Substation. As the City of Riverside continues to grow, RPU would not have the energy capacity to meet demand. The RPU system would be vulnerable to blackouts, specifically during the hot summer months.