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4.1 Aesthetics

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless APMs Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☑	☐
b. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☐	☐	☑	☐
c. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock out-croppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☑
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☑	☐

4.1.1 Introduction

Visual or aesthetic resources include natural and built elements of the landscape that are visible and that contribute to the public's experience and appreciation of their environment. Impacts to aesthetic resources are generally defined in terms of a project's physical characteristics, potential for visibility, and the extent to which the presence or absence of project features would change the visual character or quality of the visual environment. This visual analysis follows the CEQA Guidelines for analyzing potential impacts on visual resources. These guidelines were further supplemented with guidance provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects (FHWA 1988). The analysis herein is further supplemented by a technical appendix, 4.1-A, Aesthetic Technical Analysis for Salt Creek Substation PEA.

The Proposed Project consists of the following main components: construction and operation of the proposed Salt Creek Substation, modifications to the Existing Miguel Substation (Existing Substation), construction and operation of a 5-mile-long power line (TL 6965) along an existing transmission corridor (Transmission Corridor) between the Existing Substation south to the proposed Salt Creek Substation, and three staging yards (see Figure 3-3). In addition, five potential alternative staging yards were identified within the Olympic Training Center (OTC).

As noted in Section 3.8, Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operations Restrictions, several design features have been incorporated into the Proposed Project to minimize aesthetic impacts. These design features include selecting a site that would place the Salt Creek Substation 45 to 50 feet below the grade of Hunte Parkway (Figure 4.1-1), preparation of a conceptual landscape plan for the Salt Creek Substation (Figure 4.1-2), and locating TL 6965 within an existing transmission corridor.

4.1.2 Methodology

This visual analysis follows the CEQA Guidelines for analyzing potential impacts on visual resources. These guidelines were further supplemented with guidance provided by FHWA in Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects (FHWA 1988). This methodology was selected for its rigorous evaluation and applicability to the unique visual characteristics of the Proposed Project (e.g., long linear forms, spatially defined corridors, and vertical or overhead elements). Ultimately, the analysis sought to answer three primary questions:

1. What are the visual qualities and characteristics of the existing landscape in the Proposed Project area?
2. What are the potential effects of the Proposed Project on the area's visual quality and aesthetics?
3. Who would see the Proposed Project, and what is the likely level of concern about or reaction to how the Proposed Project visually fits within the existing landscape?

Analysis included a review of available technical data, maps, aerial and ground-level photographs, simulations, and Proposed-Project-specific technical drawings. Using the methodology noted above, existing visual resources, proposed visual changes, and the potential viewer response to those changes were also evaluated.

4.1.2.1 Evaluating Existing and Proposed Visual Resources

The quality and character of the existing visual environment were documented through field reconnaissance, photographic records, and aerial photograph interpretation according to the process described below. Elements of the Proposed Project were also evaluated to determine the potential level of change to existing conditions.

4.1.2.2 Predicting Viewer Response

The measure of quality in a given view must be tempered by an anticipated level of viewer response. Viewer sensitivity, or the extent to which the viewing public may notice or experience a substantial change in visual quality, is based on a number of factors that can differ in level of importance from one viewer to another. Because this sensitivity is important to understand, the Proposed Project was evaluated with consideration for the visibility of resources in the landscape, proximity of viewers to the visual resource, elevation of viewers relative to the visual resource, frequency and duration of views, number of viewers, and type of individual viewers or viewer groups.

Figure 4.1-1: Proposed Salt Creek Substation Cross-section

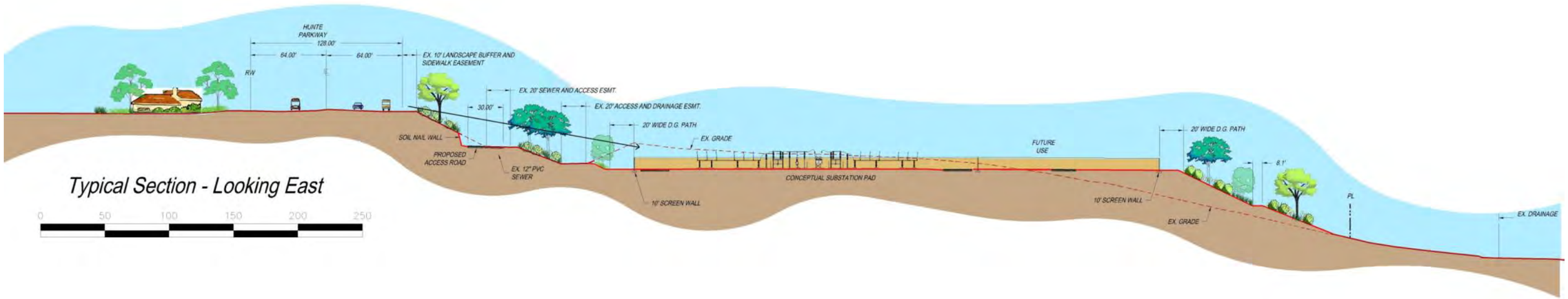

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Figure 4.1-2: Landscape Concept Plan

4.1.3 Existing Conditions

The proposed Salt Creek Substation site consists of 11.64 acres of vacant and undeveloped land directly south of Hunte Parkway in the City of Chula Vista. The proposed Salt Creek Substation site is located at the southern edge of development in the southeastern portion of the City of Chula Vista. This developed area is characterized by a mixture of residential, school, recreation, open space uses. Land uses surrounding the proposed Salt Creek Substation site include single- and multi-family residential uses to the north and west; institutional (High Tech K-8 and High Schools) uses to the southwest; and vacant, undeveloped land to the east and south.

Land south and southwest of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site is undeveloped, including part of the City of Chula Vista's University Campus Sectional Planning Area (SPA) (University SPA). The University SPA applies to four focus areas that are located on the site of a future university and surrounding properties. The undeveloped area located east of the Salt Creek Substation site is MSCP Preserve, which is habitat that is targeted for conservation within the City of Chula Vista's MSCP for the protection of sensitive species (City of Chula Vista 1997).

A distinct visual boundary exists between the urbanized and natural areas within the Proposed Project vicinity, as evident by aerial photos (see Figure 4.1-3). The proposed new poles and power line would occur within an urbanized environment, and the substation would be located at the boundary between urbanized and undisturbed open space.

4.1.3.1 Regional Viewshed Analysis

A viewshed is a subset of a landscape unit and comprises all of the surface areas visible from an observer's viewpoint. The viewshed includes the locations of viewers likely to be affected by visual changes brought about by project features. For the Proposed Project, the viewshed boundary was established to delineate the physical extent of the visual surroundings. From there, the Proposed Project viewshed was divided into smaller portions ("landscape units") of the larger landscape to illustrate areas of distinct visual character that encapsulate a unique visual element or that represent a typical visual experience. As illustrated in Figure 4.1-4, the Proposed Project would be visible from a number of locations within "foreground" viewing distance surrounding the Proposed Project area.

Landscape Units

A landscape unit is a portion of the regional landscape and can be thought of as an outdoor room that exhibits a distinct visual character. A landscape unit will often correspond to a place or district that is commonly known among local viewers.

Analysis of the Proposed Project viewshed determined that four distinct landscape units are present within the viewshed boundary, as shown in Figure 4.1-5. The urbanized area (Unit 1) can be thought of as one unit because its overall character, texture, color, and spatial characteristics are similar. The natural, largely undeveloped area (Unit 2) to the south is visually distinct, and its limited development makes it a visually unique landscape unit. The third landscape unit (Unit 3) is the natural background area spanning south to northeast. The final unit (Unit 4) consists of the immediate viewshed around the Existing Substation.

Figure 4.1-3: Aerial Photo

Note: SDG&E is providing this map with the understanding that the map is not survey grade.

Figure 4.1-4: Viewshed Map

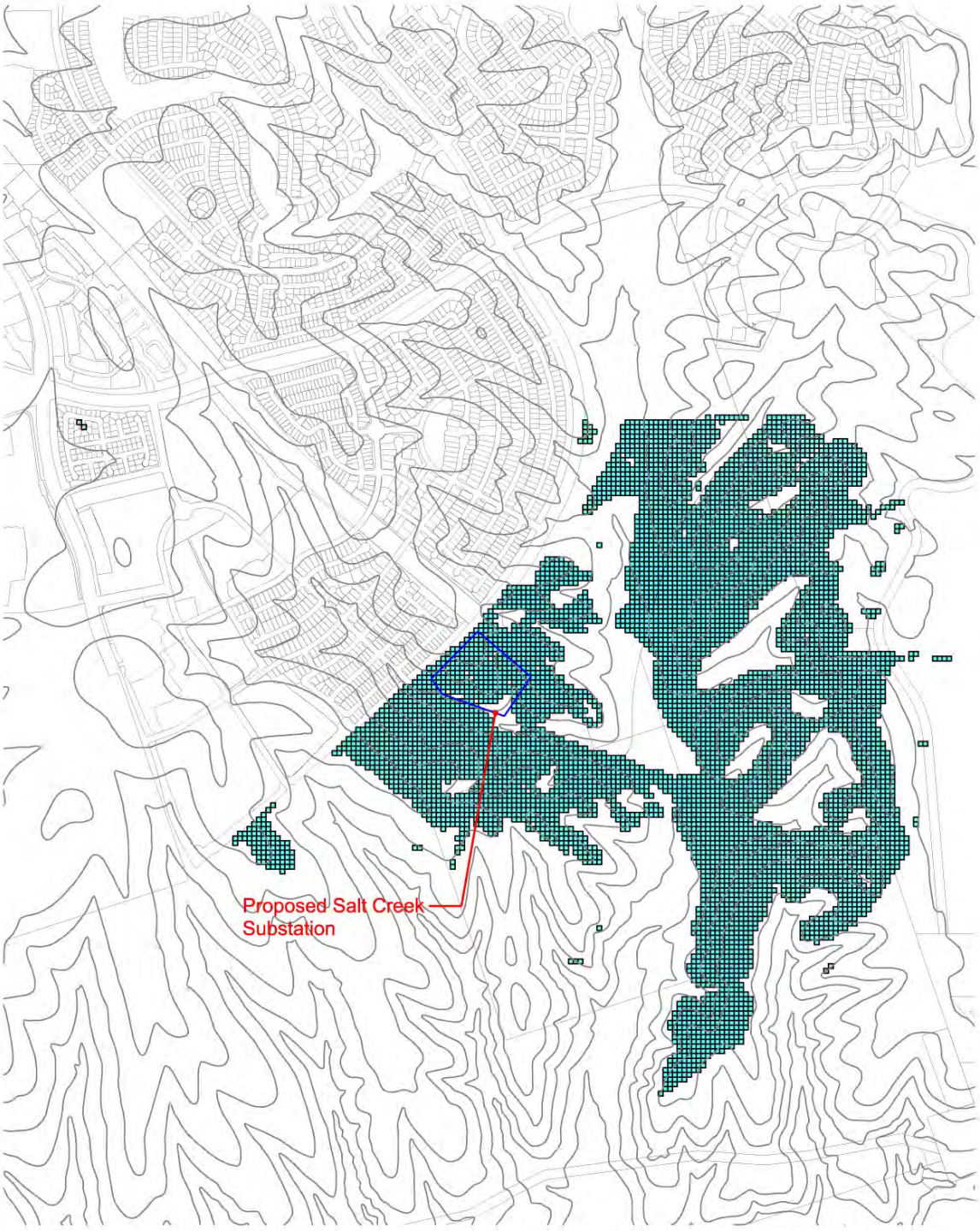
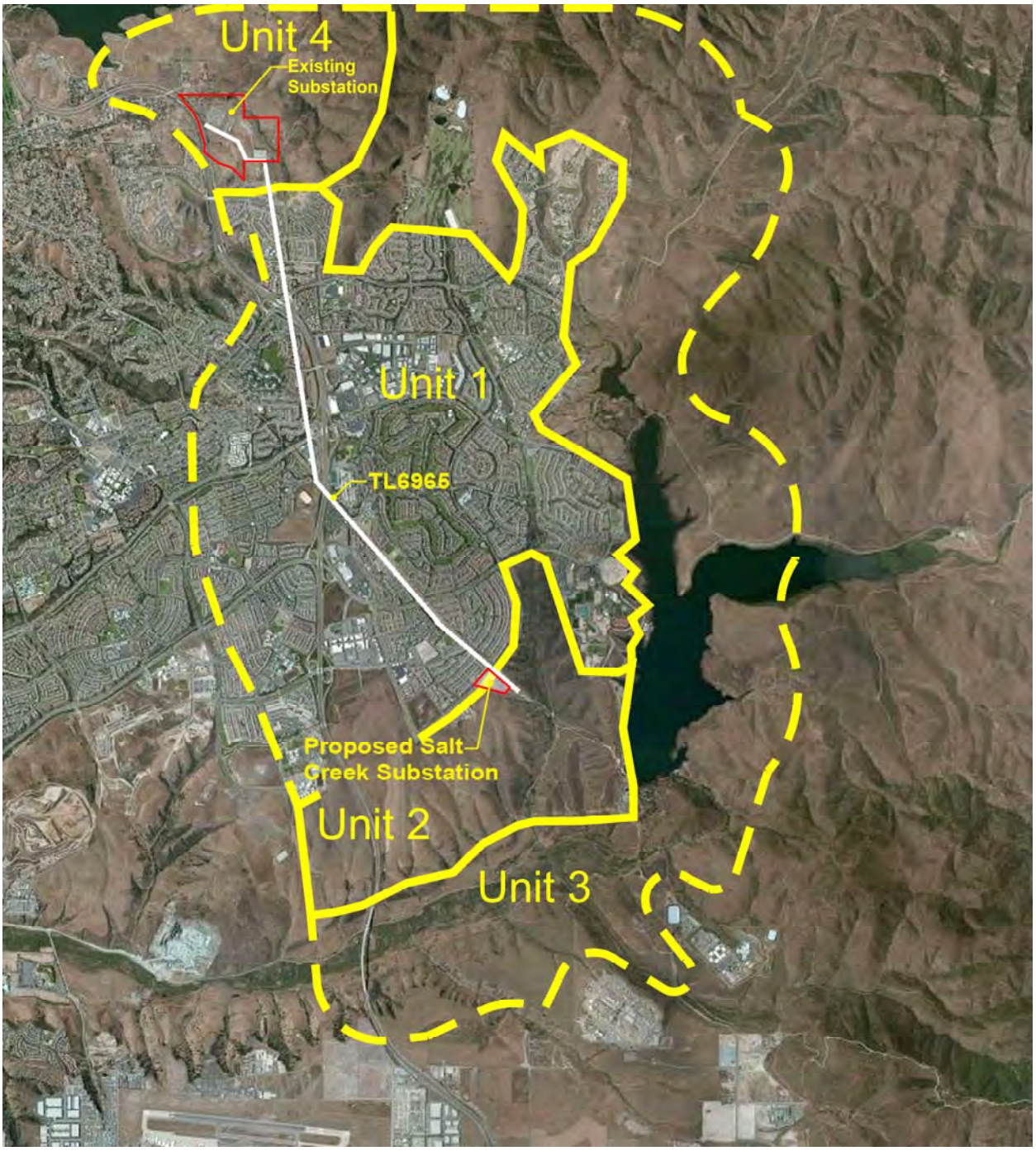


Figure 4.1-5: Landscape Units



Note: SDG&E is providing this map with the understanding that the map is not survey grade.

Existing Visual Character

The proposed Salt Creek Substation site is located in the hills above Otay River Valley, with Otay River approximately 1.4 miles to the south. The site consists of gentle to moderately sloping hillsides that are covered with grasses and native scrub habitat. The color on the hillsides changes with the seasons, but generally consists of muted grays, greens, and browns. As illustrated in Figure 4.1-6, the Proposed Project abuts both open space and dense urban development.

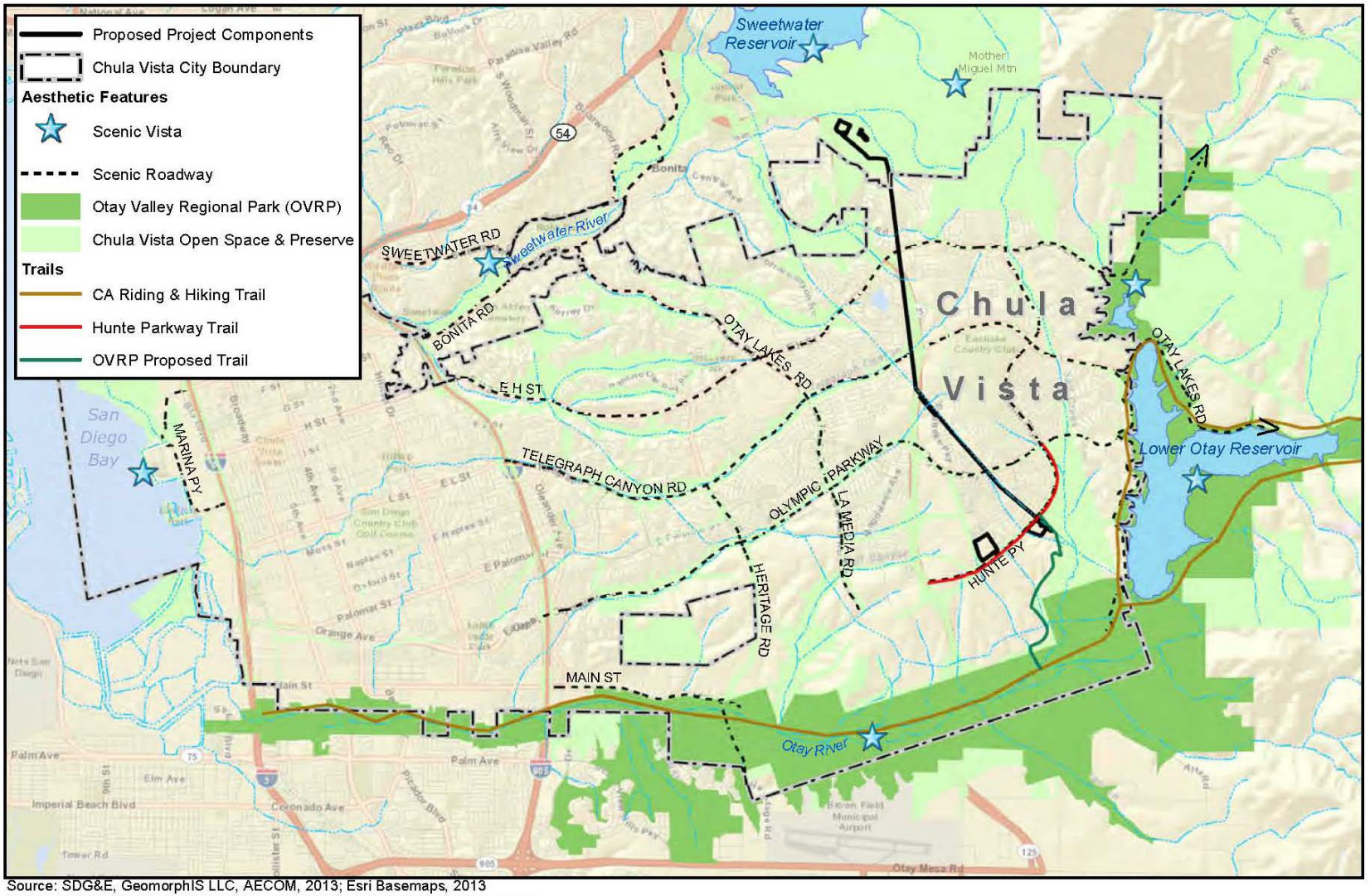
The Salt Creek Substation site is adjacent to Hunte Parkway, which is a thoroughfare traversing the region. The Hunte Parkway Trail is located directly adjacent to Hunte Parkway. The Otay Valley Regional Park (OVRP) Proposed Trail would be perpendicular to Hunte Parkway and would follow the existing Transmission Corridor. The California Riding and Hiking Trail is south of the proposed Salt Creek Substation within the OVRP. The Salt Creek Substation site is visible from a portion of the Hunte Parkway Trail, west-northwest of the substation site, and from the OVRP Proposed Trail. Long-distance views of San Miguel Mountain generally contribute to the scenic nature of views available from these trails; however, views available from the trails currently include the existing Transmission Corridor and other existing infrastructure and development that compromise the integrity of these views.

Land south and west of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site is currently undeveloped, but is part of the University SPA. The University SPA applies to four focus areas that are located on the future university site and surrounding properties. The four focus areas are the Eastern Urban Center, Regional Technology Park, University Campus, and University Village Focus Areas. Development of these focus areas would include high-density urban uses, office and business parks, retail centers, residential uses, and a major higher educational institution. These types of development would likely result in multi-story buildings located on a currently undeveloped area adjacent to the Proposed Project site. The existing rural character of the proposed University SPA site would likely become urbanized, even more so than the existing residential areas north of Hunte Parkway.

SR-125 runs north/south approximately 1 mile west of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site. The OVRP is adjacent to the proposed Salt Creek Substation site and includes various trails in the Proposed Project area. Three trails are specifically addressed in this section: one existing trail located parallel to Hunte Parkway south of the traveled way (Hunte Parkway Trail), one proposed trail that extends from Hunte Parkway (in the vicinity of the existing Transmission Corridor access road) down into the OVRP (OVRP Proposed Trail), and one existing trail that travels along Otay River south of the Proposed Project site (California Riding and Hiking Trail). The Hunte Parkway Trail is shown in Figure 4.1-7.

The Proposed Project would include an approximately 5-mile-long power line along the east side of SDG&E's existing Transmission Corridor from the Existing Substation to the proposed Salt Creek Substation. Existing infrastructure within this corridor includes a 69-kV power line on wood and steel poles and a 230-kV power line on steel lattice towers. As evident in the two figures below (Figures 4.1-8 and 4.1-9), these power lines dominate the foreground views adjacent to the Transmission Corridor.

Figure 4.1-6: Aesthetics Map

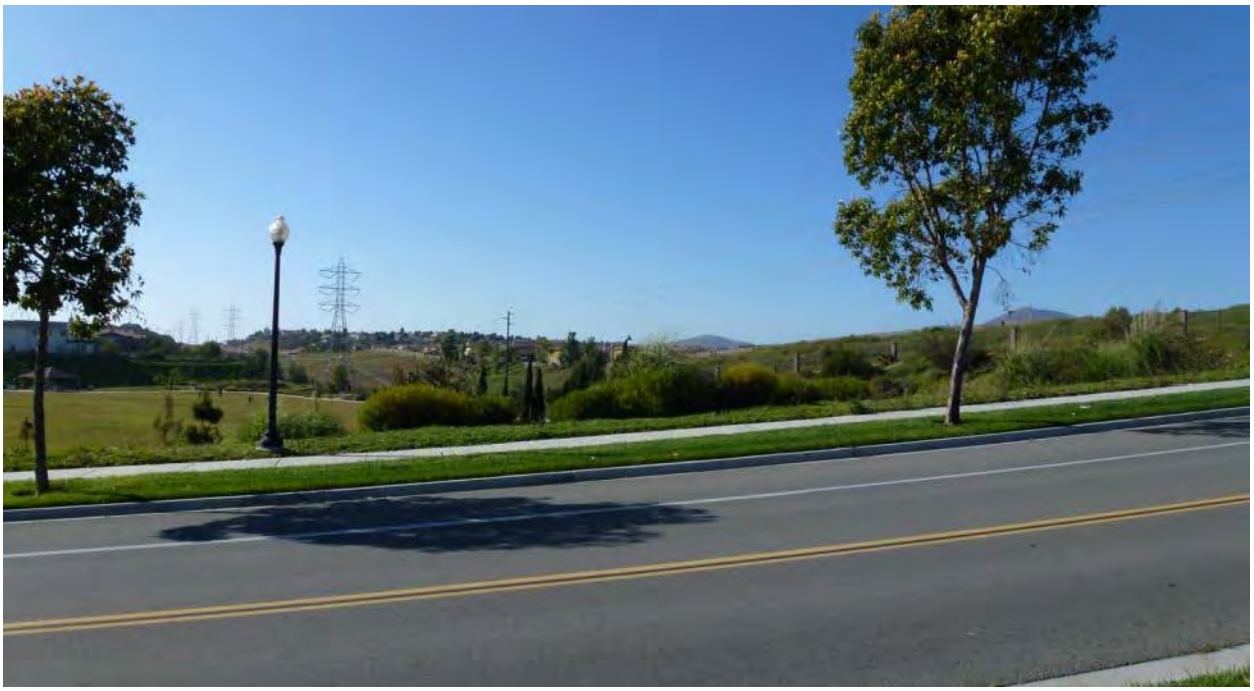


Note: SDG&E is providing this map with the understanding that the map is not survey grade.

Figure 4.1-7: Hunte Parkway Trail

Figure 4.1-8: Existing Foreground Views

Figure 4.1-9: Existing Middleground Views



Existing Visual Quality

Looking east while driving along Hunte Parkway, the subtle elevation changes and varying views of the scenic, rural background landscape provide a positive visual experience (see Figure 4.1-10). However, views to the west and north are predominately in an urbanized area and provide a minimally unique and minimally memorable visual experience. The predominance of urbanized landscape tempers the overall positive visual experience. The overall sense of the visual environment, with its variations and rural background, can be considered low to moderately vivid.

The Proposed Project viewshed is only low to moderately intact. It is an overall mixture of natural, rural, and human elements that occasionally blend quite well, but human elements tend to punctuate the horizon lines with fairly intrusive (although typical) vertical elements, such as steel lattice towers, traffic and street lights, and tract housing. See Figure 4.1-11 for a representative photo of existing intactness. Roads are simple and generally follow natural contours. Fence types tend to be diverse, with no set theme. The visibility of human elements and scale of this architecture introduce occasionally disparate visual elements within the landscape unit.

Although the urbanized area appears as a coherent unit within the regional landscape, and the natural/rural area also appears as a coherent unit, the regional landscape only has a moderate sense of compositional unity due to the variety of human elements. Although residential development has encroached on the open space, development has retained the integrity of the natural topographic, creating unity. The area south of Hunte Parkway is highly unified;

however, this is not enough to make the overall landscape unity more than moderate. See Figure 4.1-12 for a representative photo of existing unity along the Transmission Corridor.

Viewer Groups and Viewer Response

The existing rural quality of the area to the south and east of the proposed substation may be considered by viewers as a substantial asset. Viewers may choose to visit this area, or live here, because they are drawn to its open space qualities. The number of scenic roads in the area, as described below, indicates the attitudes and awareness of the community to visual surroundings, suggesting a moderate to high degree of viewer awareness to change.

Because of its nature and location, the Proposed Project would be visible to several different groups of people, but may or may not constitute a dramatic or highly noticeable change. Viewer groups who would experience the Proposed Project include pedestrians and park visitors, recreational viewers, and passing motorists. Under the applicable standards, aesthetic impacts are limited to those views that are visually or physically accessible to the public. Nonetheless, residents were considered as part of both viewer groups, as they are likely to be both recreational viewers and vehicular viewers. The public views were taken into consideration to identify 11 key views, as shown in Figures 4.1-17 through 4.1-32. A description of each viewer group follows.

Recreational Viewers

The OVRP is located adjacent to the Proposed Project site, particularly the proposed Salt Creek Substation site. Viewers walking, jogging, or cycling would experience views of the Proposed Project site primarily as they travel along the Hunte Parkway Trail. Additionally, an unimproved OVRP Proposed Trail follows the Transmission Corridor directly adjacent to the proposed Salt Creek Substation site. The proposed Salt Creek Substation would be directly adjacent and visible to viewers using this trail connection to the California Riding and Hiking Trail. Visual changes could be highly noticeable to these viewers. Their concern for scenic quality might be considered moderately high; however, the distant background view of San Miguel Mountain would be more visually dominant than the foreground view from the perspective of these viewers.

In addition to the recreational trail viewers, the Proposed Project would be visible to visitors of the local community parks, including neighborhood and regional parks. There are two improved neighborhood parks adjacent to the TL 6965 corridor. OVRP is also located adjacent to the Proposed Project site, particularly the proposed Salt Creek Substation site. The OVRP is predominantly viewed and used as a natural park. One reason visitors attend the park is to observe the area's natural character. Visitors who frequent the park are considered to have a moderate sensitivity to changes within the Transmission Corridor, as proposed visual conditions would be similar to existing conditions. However, with the exception of trail users in the immediate vicinity of the proposed substation, recreational viewers of the Proposed Project site would be quite distant. For these reasons, viewer sensitivity to visual changes for recreational viewers at the Proposed Project site would be considered moderate.

Figure 4.1-10: View East from Hunte Parkway

Figure 4.1-11: View South along the Transmission Corridor

Figure 4.1-12: View North toward the Transmission Corridor

Passing Motorists

A majority of the Proposed Project would be visible to motorists traveling in the Proposed Project area. Motorists would be aware of the Proposed Project during construction; however, motorists' sensitivity overall would be considered low during operations. For motorists driving along the majority of Hunte Parkway, the proposed Salt Creek Substation site would not be visible. The site sits approximately 45 to 50 feet lower than Hunte Parkway. However, when traveling eastbound/northbound on Hunte Parkway from the southwest, the proposed Salt Creek Substation site is briefly visible. Middleground views of the OVRP and background views of distant Otay Mountain are the most prominent visual resources for motorists in this area. Because of the vertical separation between Hunte Parkway and the proposed substation, and because of the short duration of these views, motorists' sensitivity would be considered low to moderate.

4.1.3.2 Regulatory Background

Federal

There are no federal regulations applicable to the Proposed Project related to aesthetics and visual resources.

State

California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) Scenic Highway Program

The Scenic Highway Program is aimed at the protection and long-term preservation of highway corridors with scenic value to ensure the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. It

includes highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been designated as such. The status of a state scenic highway changes from eligible to officially designated when the local jurisdiction adopts a scenic corridor protection program, applies to Caltrans for scenic highway approval, and receives the designation. A city or county may propose adding routes with outstanding scenic elements to the list of eligible highways; however, state legislation is required for them to become a designated scenic highway. There are no eligible or officially designated state scenic highways located in the vicinity of the Proposed Project site (Caltrans 2012).

Local

Since CPUC has exclusive jurisdiction over the siting, design, and construction of the Proposed Project, the Proposed Project is not subject to local discretionary land use or zoning regulations, and permits are not required for construction or operation of the facilities. However, a review of local land use plans was conducted to identify any relevant local land use regulations relating to visual resources for informational purposes as part of the environmental review process.

County of San Diego General Plan

The County of San Diego General Plan Scenic Highway Element (August 1986) established a Scenic Highway Program to protect and enhance the county's scenic, historic, and recreational resources within a network of scenic highway corridors. The Scenic Highway Element of the General Plan recommends establishing design guidelines for scenic corridors. The Scenic Highway Element provides a list of county scenic highways. There are two county-designated scenic highways in the vicinity: Otay Lakes Road from the Chula Vista City limits to SR-94, and Proctor Valley Road from the Chula Vista City limits to SR-94.

City of Chula Vista General Plan

The General Plan identifies two types of scenic highways: urban and rural. Urban routes are those "that traverse an urban area with the scenic corridor offering a view of attractive and exciting urban scenes." Rural scenic highways provide for an enriched experience of natural scenic resources and aesthetic values, and may include large preserved canyons or natural areas, or areas within the Chula Vista Greenbelt.

The City of Chula Vista has several designated Scenic Roadways where views of unique natural features and roadway characteristics, including enhanced landscaping, adjoining natural slopes, or special design features, make traveling a pleasant visual experience. Scenic Roadways that traverse a portion of the Proposed Project are as follows (see also Figure 4.1-16):

- East H Street from Interstate 805 (I-805) to Mount Miguel Road
- Telegraph Canyon Road/Otay Lakes Road from I-805 to Lower Otay Lake
- Olympic Parkway from I-805 to Lower Otay Lake
- Hunte Parkway from Eastlake Parkway to East H Street

The City of Chula Vista General Plan includes the following applicable policies related to scenic resources in the Land Use and Transportation Element:

LUT 13.1: Identify and protect important public viewpoints and viewsheds throughout the planning area, including features within and outside the planning area, such as mountains, native habitat areas, San Diego Bay, and historic resources.

LUT 13.2: Continue to implement the City of Chula Vista's planned open space network.

LUT 13.4: Any discretionary projects proposed adjacent to scenic routes, with the exception of individual single-family dwellings, shall be subject to design review to ensure that the design of the development proposal will enhance the scenic quality of the route. Review should include site design, architectural design, height, landscaping, signage, and utilities. Development adjacent to designated scenic routes should be designed to:

- Create substantial open areas adjacent to scenic routes through clustering development;
- Create a pleasing streetscape through landscaping and varied building setbacks; and
- Coordinate signage, graphics and/or signage requirements, and standards.

The Proposed Project is exempt from the City of Chula Vista's design review requirements pursuant to CPUC General Order 131-D, Section XIV.B, which exempts electrical generation and transmission projects from regulation by the City of Chula Vista. SDG&E underwent an extensive evaluation of potential site locations for the proposed Salt Creek Substation with the City of Chula Vista over a period of 10 years that resulted in the selection of the proposed site as the preferred location for the substation, due, in part, to the reduced visual impact. SDG&E also met with City of Chula Vista staff to discuss the design of the substation, and would obtain a grading permit from the City of Chula Vista for the proposed Salt Creek Substation. Furthermore, the proposed TL 6965 would be located within the existing Transmission Corridor to reduce the visual impacts of installing a new power line.

4.1.4 Impacts

4.1.4.1 Significance Criteria

Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines, the Proposed Project would have a significant effect on aesthetic resources if it would do any of the following:

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

In applying these criteria to determine significance, the following items were considered: visibility of the Proposed Project from sensitive public vantage points, degree to which the Proposed Project would contrast with or be consistent with the existing landscape, degree of change in composition and character of the existing landscape, and number and sensitivity of viewers. Visual simulations were prepared using computer modeling and rendering techniques to illustrate potential changes to the existing visual environment resulting from the Proposed Project.

4.1.4.2 Impact Analysis

Question 4.1(a) – Scenic Vista

For this evaluation, a scenic vista is defined as a distant public view along or through an opening or corridor that is recognized and valued for its scenic quality. Scenic vistas within the City of Chula Vista include Otay River and Sweetwater River Valleys, Upper and Lower Otay Lakes, Sweetwater Reservoir, San Miguel/Mother Miguel Mountains, and San Diego Bay (City of Chula Vista 2005).

Construction – Less than Significant

Salt Creek Substation

The nearest scenic vista is the valley surrounding Lower Otay Lake. It is located approximately 1 mile east of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site. However, the lake itself is not visible from the Proposed Project site. Likewise, the proposed Salt Creek Substation site is not visible from Lower Otay Lake due to its distance from the site and intervening topographic relief.

The OVRP is considered a scenic view in the City of Chula Vista General Plan. The OVRP is located adjacent to the Salt Creek Substation site, and views between portions of the OVRP and the substation site exist. Views of the substation from the OVRP Proposed Trail and Hunte Parkway Trail immediately to the north and west of the substation, respectively, would be more impacted than the distant views from the south, due to the shorter distance and relatively small scale of the overall visual experience. Trails in the immediate vicinity of the proposed substation are within a transitional urbanized area. Therefore, construction activities associated with the proposed Salt Creek Substation would have a less-than-significant impact on scenic vistas.

TL 6965 and TL 6910 Loop-In

Construction of TL 6965 would occur within the existing SDG&E Transmission Corridor, extending approximately 5 miles from its northwestern terminus at the Existing Substation to its southeastern terminus at the proposed Salt Creek Substation in the Otay Ranch area. Since construction would occur within the existing Transmission Corridor, and since there are no scenic vistas in the immediate vicinity of the proposed power lines or in sufficient proximity such that views from those vistas would be adversely affected by construction activities associated with the proposed power lines, no impact would occur. Three poles are proposed immediately east of the proposed substation. Construction equipment may include a crane, boom or bucket truck, and other construction-related vehicles. Construction would be

temporary, and would move along the power line as work is completed. Therefore, construction of the proposed TL 6965 would have a less-than-significant impact on scenic vistas.

Existing Substation Modifications

The Existing Substation is located approximately 0.75 mile south of Sweetwater Reservoir. The existing site is situated on a relatively flat area located directly adjacent to and east of SR-125. In addition, the site is located west of low rolling hills. There are no unique visual features or views available from the site or its vicinity. Currently, the site exhibits a high level of visual clutter due to the presence of numerous existing power poles and lines, racks, and other related substation elements. No scenic vistas are in the immediate vicinity of the Existing Substation or in sufficient proximity such that views from those vistas would be adversely affected by modifications to the Existing Substation. In addition, proposed modifications at the Existing Substation for a new 69-kV circuit position and steel supports would be minimal. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Staging Yards

Staging yards would be used temporarily during construction. Temporary use of the staging yards would not adversely affect scenic vistas; therefore, no impact would occur.

Operation and Maintenance – No Impact

Routine maintenance crews would inspect the proposed power lines within the existing Transmission Corridor or travel to the proposed Salt Creek Substation only periodically throughout the year and for limited periods. There are no scenic vistas in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Project or in sufficient proximity such that views from those vistas would be adversely affected during routine maintenance of the Proposed Project components. No impact would occur.

Question 4.1(b) – Existing Visual Character or Quality of the Site

Construction – Less-than-Significant Impact

Salt Creek Substation

Construction of the proposed Salt Creek Substation is anticipated to require approximately 18 to 24 months from initial site development through energization and testing. Construction activities would be completed in two stages. Stage 1 would consist of site grading and below-grade construction, and stage 2 would include erection of substation structures.

During site grading, the visual character of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site would change from existing conditions. The proposed Salt Creek Substation site would be fenced off with a chain-link fence. Grading activities would substantially alter topography at the site.

Viewers walking, jogging, or cycling would experience views of construction activities at the proposed Salt Creek Substation site, primarily as they travel along the trail/pathway on Hunte Parkway. The proposed Salt Creek Substation would be located at a lower elevation than the trail/pathway; however, the proposed substation would be visible from portions of the trail

along Hunte Parkway. These viewers would experience a moderately high sensitivity to visual changes, because viewers traveling along the trail would have longer views of their surroundings and their awareness of changes to the scene could be heightened. However, as noted above, the substation would be located 45 to 50 feet below the roadway, and substation construction would be temporary. While viewer sensitivity may be moderately high, the effects of substation construction on recreational viewers would be less than significant.

The proposed Salt Creek Substation would be visible to passing motorists traveling east along a portion of Hunte Parkway. Although Hunte Parkway is a major roadway, this street currently experiences relatively low traffic volumes. Motorists may be aware of, and sensitive to, the view of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site during construction; however, because of the temporary nature and limited duration of these views, motorists' sensitivity to change is considered low.

In addition, no scenic resources, such as rock outcroppings or historic buildings, are located near the proposed Salt Creek Substation site that would be impacted during substation construction. The proposed Salt Creek Substation site is located below Hunte Parkway in elevation. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

TL 6965 and TL6910 Loop-In

Installation of power line structures would require clearing and removing vegetation. Some minor grading would occur to create work pads at approximately 24 locations. Installing steel poles and overhead conductors would occur throughout the existing Transmission Corridor. Trenching for construction of underground conduits would occur within SDG&E's property and along the Transmission Corridor adjacent to the Salt Creek Substation.

Construction activities would be visible to passing motorists traveling along roadways that traverse the Transmission Corridor. Motorists may be aware of construction within the Transmission Corridor; however, because of the short duration of these views and because of the existing power lines in the Transmission Corridor, motorists' sensitivity is considered low.

The presence of construction equipment within the existing Transmission Corridor is not uncommon and would not create an adverse contrast to the existing landscape. For these reasons, the viewer response would be low. Power line construction within the existing Transmission Corridor would be short term and would cease upon completion. Therefore, impacts from construction to visual resources would be less than significant.

Existing Substation Modifications

Minor modifications at the Existing Substation would occur within the existing SDG&E property that is not accessible to the public. Construction modifications at the Existing Substation would constitute a short-term condition and would create a limited temporary change in visual character and quality at the Existing Substation during construction. Motorists traveling northbound on SR-125 may have fleeting views of the Proposed Project site; however, because of the temporary nature and location of work within an existing substation, motorists' sensitivity to change is considered low. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Staging Yards

Hunte Parkway Staging Yard

Approximately 8 acres of a 22-acre previously graded pad at the Hunte Parkway staging yard would be used for staging purposes during construction of the Proposed Project. Temporary power sources would be installed at this staging yard. The entire Hunte Parkway staging yard would be enclosed by an approximately 6-foot-high chain-link security fence, with screening slats or mesh and a locking gate. This staging yard would also include an office trailer(s) and portable restrooms. Minor grading may occur for access only.

Private views of the staging yard would be experienced from front yards, back yards, and some residential windows located along Discovery Falls Drive and Crossroads Street adjacent to the Hunte Parkway staging yard. Use of the Hunte Parkway staging yard would constitute a short-term condition (approximately 18 to 24 months), and would create a temporary change in visual character and quality of the site.

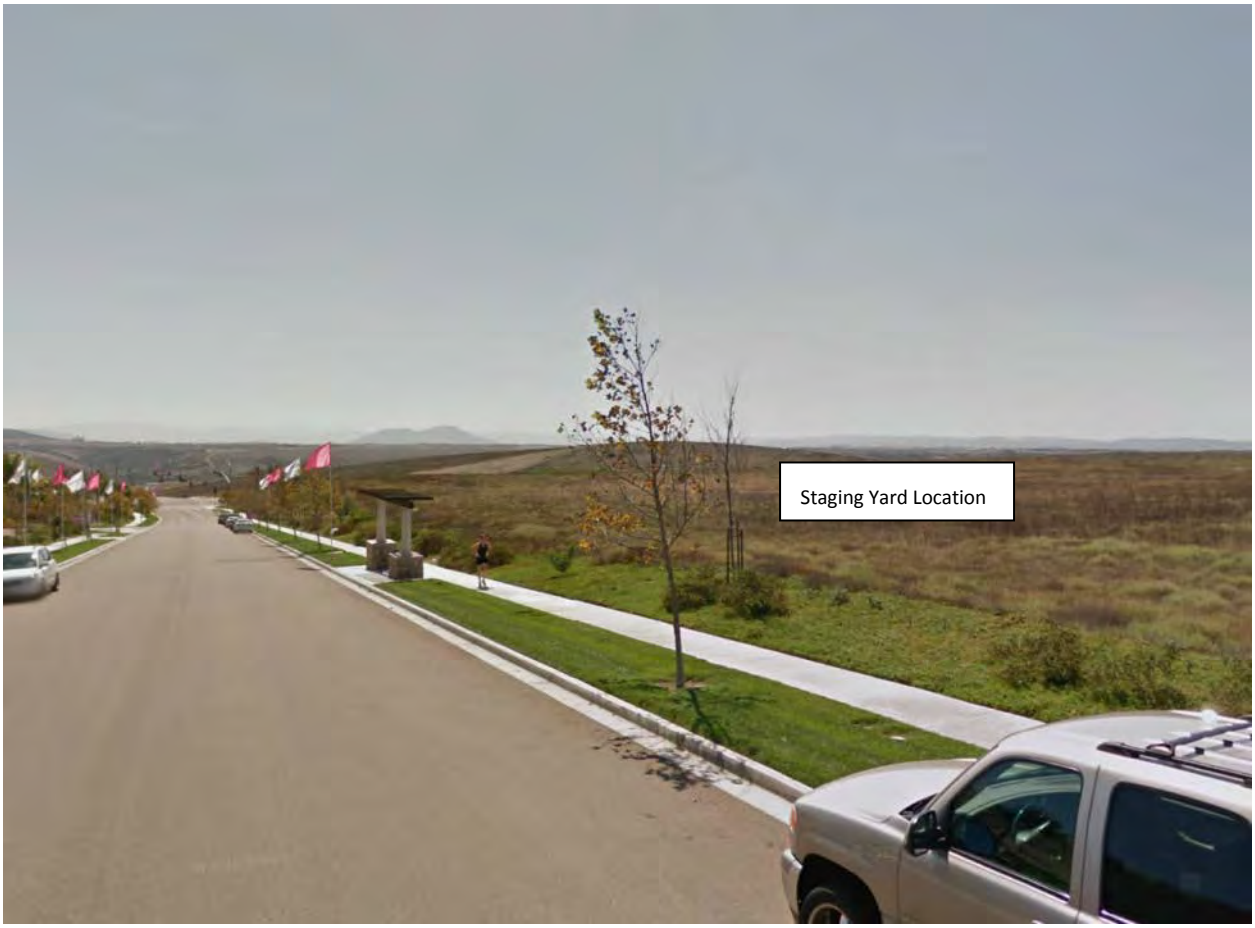
Since the staging yard would be above Hunte Parkway and Eastlake Parkway, only portions of the Hunte Parkway staging yard would be visible to passing motorists traveling along Hunte Parkway and Eastlake Parkway (Figure 4.1-13).

Figure 4.1-13: Existing View of the Staging Yard Location from Hunte Parkway

However, as seen in Figure 4.1-14, motorists traveling south along portions of Discovery Falls Drive and Crossroads Street would be above the Staging Yard, and, thus, it would be visible. Discovery Falls Drive and Crossroad Street are not busy streets, so relatively few passing motorists would be exposed to these temporary construction views.

Motorists may be aware of and sensitive to the view of the Hunte Parkway staging yard during construction. However, motorists' sensitivity is considered low because of the grade difference between some of the adjacent roadways and the temporary nature of the view. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Figure 4.1-14: Existing View of the Staging Yard Location Looking South from Discovery Falls Drive



Eastlake Parkway Staging Yard

The Eastlake Parkway staging yard would be located along the west side of the Transmission Corridor between SR-125 and Eastlake Parkway. The staging yard would be used during construction of the proposed TL 6965, and may be used to store poles, construction materials, and equipment. As shown in Figure 4.1-15, the site has been previously disturbed and is visually dominated by existing power lines, poles, towers, and access roads. Minimal grading would be required on the northwest side of the staging yard, and the southwest portion would require no grading. This area is currently being used as a staging yard. The land immediately northwest of the proposed staging area is single-family residential, and Eastlake High School comprises the northeastern border of the staging yard.

The proposed staging yard would be visible from residential areas when viewers stand at the edge of residential property lines. The proposed staging area would be located below these residences, so it would not be visible from the bulk of the ground floor areas. Looking northwest from Eastlake Parkway, the proposed staging area would be visible to passing motorists. However, this site is currently used as a staging yard. As such, minimal to no change in visual character from the existing to the proposed staging area is anticipated.

The view from SR-125 is similar to that from Eastlake Parkway, with the duration of the view being even shorter due to the higher speeds on SR-125. Because it is an existing staging yard, because use of the site for the Proposed Project would be temporary, and because motorists views of the site would be short in duration, viewer sensitivity is considered low. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Figure 4.1-15: View of Eastlake Parkway Staging Yard from Eastlake Parkway

Existing Substation Staging Yard

Staging for construction would also occur at an existing SDG&E-owned staging yard located at the Existing Substation. This staging yard would be used primarily to support construction activities associated with the proposed modifications to the Existing Substation and to store materials and related construction equipment. This staging yard would also serve as the helicopter fly yard/incidental landing area. This site was previously disturbed; therefore, no grading and/or slope stabilization is anticipated. An office trailer(s) may be used at this staging yard.

This staging yard is used, as needed, for projects in the vicinity. Therefore, staging in this location would not result in a substantial change in the visual character of the area. The site is approximately 700 feet east of SR-125. Some motorists traveling on northbound SR-125 may have fleeting views, due to their high speed of travel, of the staging yard. However, the Existing Substation and related transmission lines dominate the foreground view for SR-125 motorists traveling toward the Existing Substation. Because it is an existing staging yard, because use of the site for the Proposed Project would be temporary, and because motorist views of the site would be short in duration, viewer sensitivity is considered low. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Olympic Training Center Staging Yard

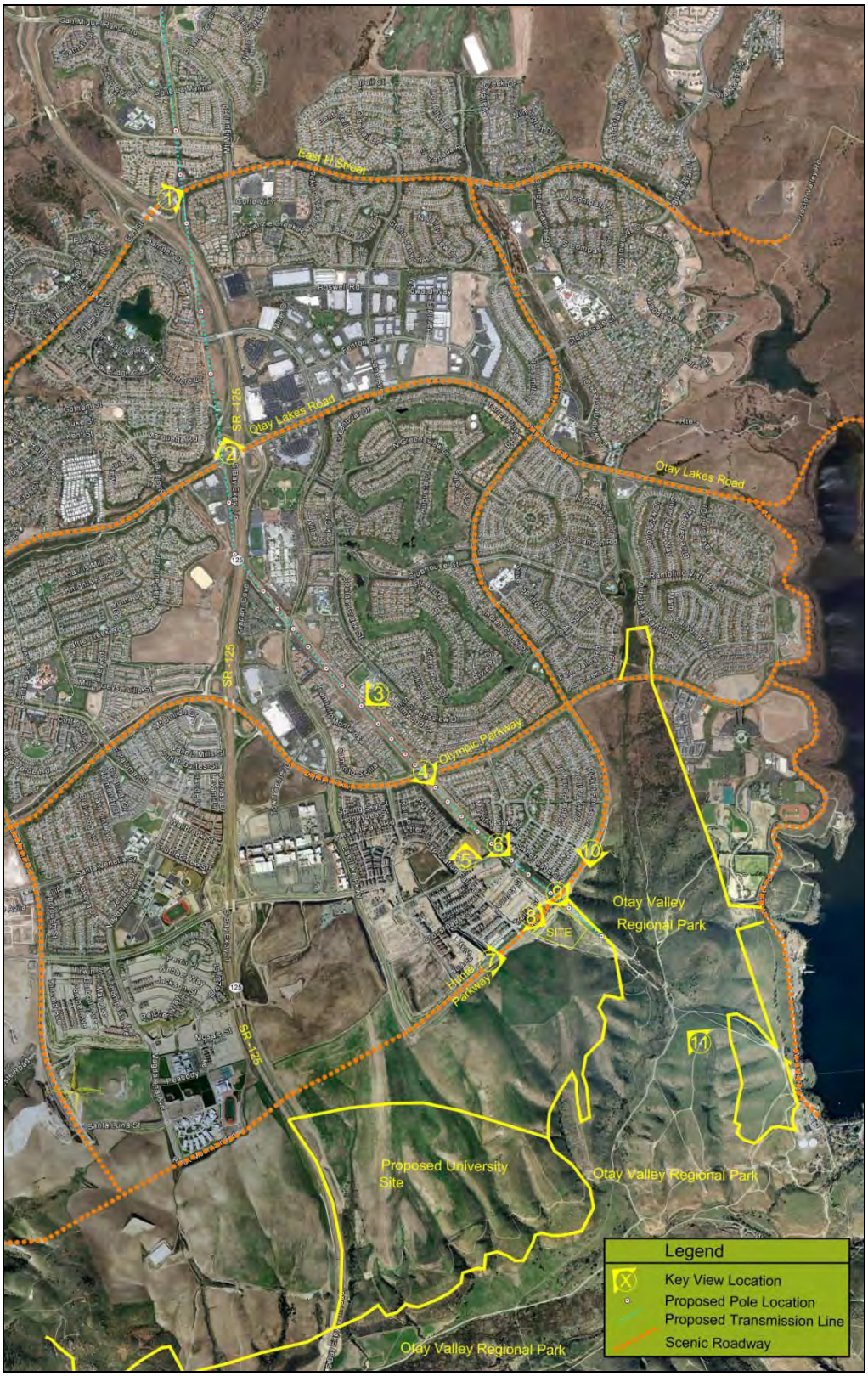
Five potential alternative staging yards within OTC were considered to provide backup and flexibility during construction if staging yard availability changes prior to construction. These staging yards may be used for assembling poles; storing material and equipment; refueling vehicles and construction equipment by a mobile fueling truck; and serving as a location for office trailer(s), portable restrooms, and parking. They would include lighting and temporary power. The five potential staging yards were previously disturbed; therefore, no grading is anticipated. Staging yards would be enclosed by chain-link fencing with a security gate.

OTC is a year-round athletic training facility located to the northeast of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site. Vehicles and materials required for Proposed Project construction would travel to/from the staging yard along Olympic Parkway. Two of the proposed lots on the property are located adjacent to Olympic Parkway; however, the lots would not be visible from Olympic Parkway due to screened landscaping and hillsides. The remaining three lots would be located at the southern portion of the property and would not be visible from public vantage points. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Operation and Maintenance – Less-than-Significant Impact

Visual analysis was conducted for the operation and maintenance phase of the Proposed Project for each of the 11 identified key views. Following each key view is an impact analysis summary that includes a rating on a scale of 0 to 4 for key elements of visual quality and viewer response. The total numerical scale of impact could range from -16 to 0, were 0 would constitute no visual impact and any number less than or equal to -9 would constitute significant impact. For more detailed numerical scoring, refer to Appendix 4.1-A. A key view location map (Figure 4.1-16) details the location and direction of the views.

Figure 4.1-16: Key View Location Map



Key View 1

Figure 4.1-17 shows the location of Key View 1. Figure 4.1-18 shows the "before" and "after" view looking east at the proposed Transmission Corridor from SR-125 and East H Street. East H Street at this location is a designated Scenic Roadway. This view of the Transmission Corridor is typically seen by residents, pedestrians, and passing motorists. The existing transmission tower is visible in the background and would remain with the Proposed Project.

The primary change in the "after" view would be the addition of a foundation pole near the existing transmission tower, along with its associated power lines. Since the pole addition occurs within the existing Transmission Corridor and is adjacent to an existing steel lattice tower, the Proposed Project would represent a minor visual change that would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the site. The proposed pole is essentially obscured by the existing steel lattice power.

Figure 4.1-17: Key View 1

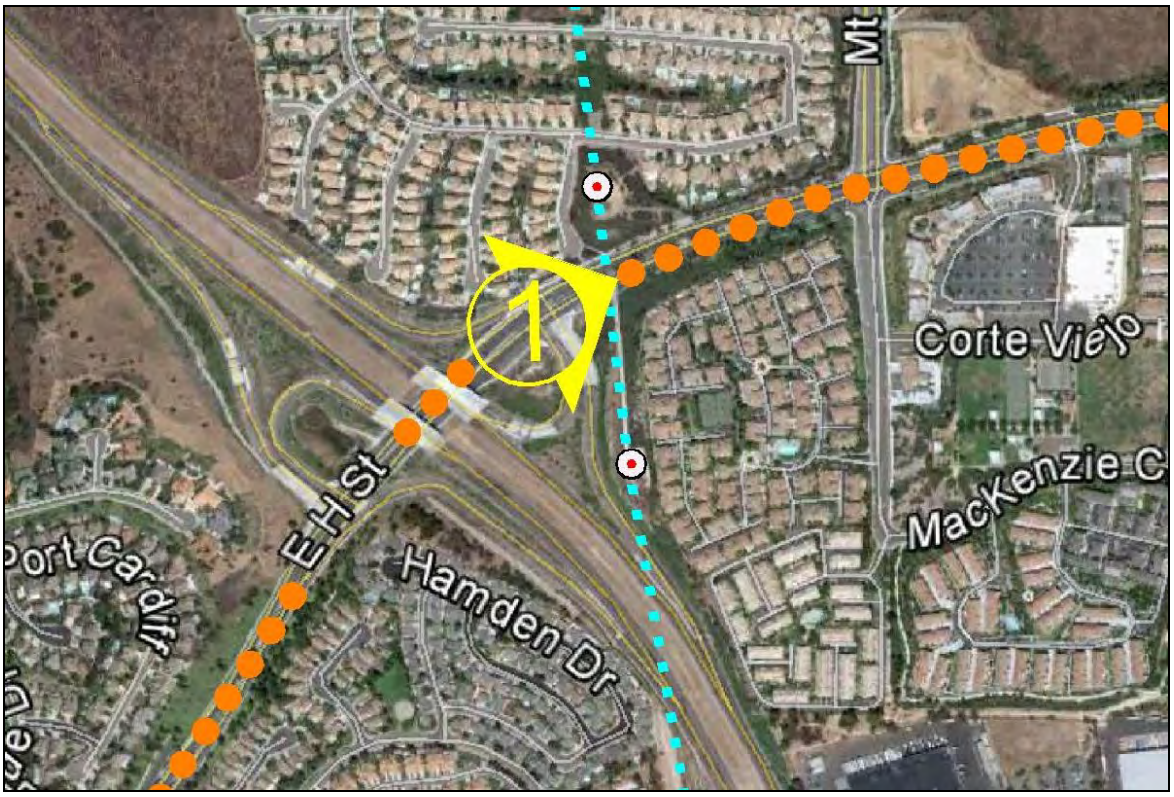


Figure 4.1-18: Key View 1: View Looking East from SR-125/East H Street

BEFORE

AFTER*

*Based on preliminary engineering design. Exact pole heights may vary depending on field conditions.

Existing development is residential. Due to the developed nature of the surrounding area and the existing steel towers visible from the observation point, the inclusion of new poles would largely go unnoticed by motorists on East H Street. The curving nature of the road would help to minimize any impacts. As a result, the visual quality would remain unchanged, giving a neutral visual impact (0 = no impact). As such, impacts would be less than significant. See the analysis matrices in Appendix 4.1-A for numerical calculations.

Key View 2

Figure 4.1-19 shows the location of Key View 2. Figure 4.1-20 shows the "before" and "after" views looking north at the Transmission Corridor from SR-125 and Otay Lakes Road. At this location, Otay Lakes Road is a designated Scenic Roadway. This view of the Transmission Corridor is typically seen by residents, pedestrians, and passing motorists, and would remain with the Proposed Project. An existing transmission tower and a steel pole are shown in the middleground. A chain-link fence surrounding the Transmission Corridor is shown in the foreground along Otay Lakes Road.

The primary change in the "after" view would be the addition of steel poles near the existing transmission towers and their associated power lines. Since pole additions would occur within the existing Transmission Corridor, the Proposed Project would represent a minor visual change that would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the site. No changes to the foreground would occur.

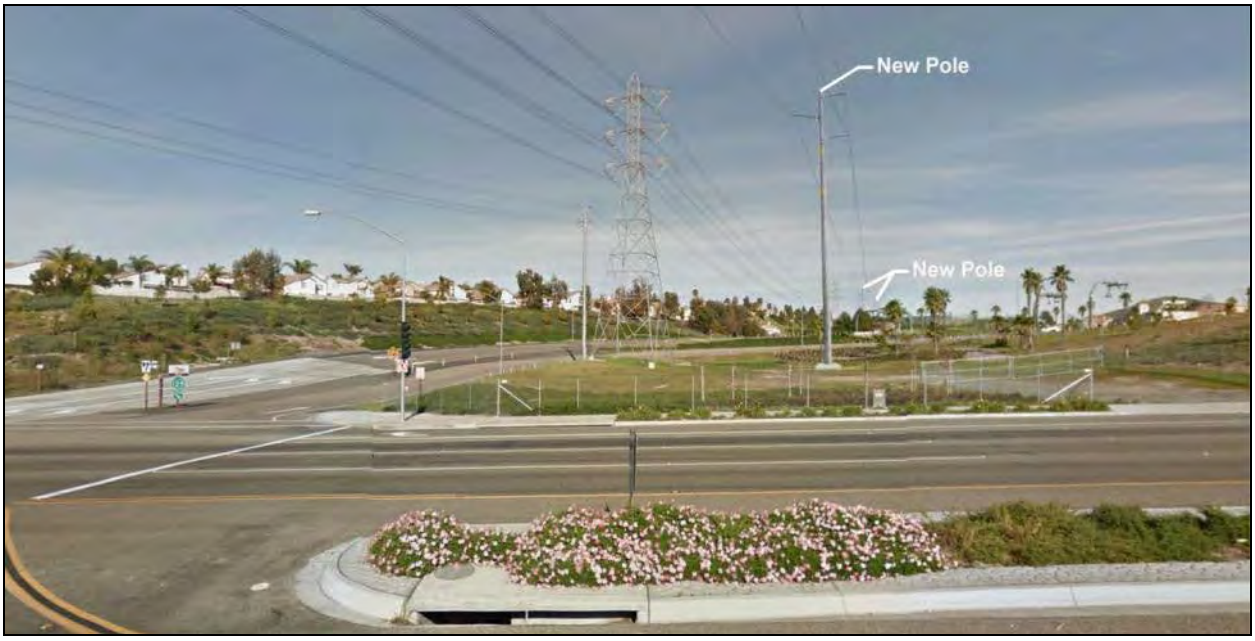
Views of existing development are residential to the west and commercial to the east. Due to the surrounding area's developed nature and existing steel towers visible from the observation point, inclusion of new poles and conductors would have a minimal impact on the visual quality.

Figure 4.1-19: Key View 2

Due to the distance from existing towers to new poles, poles would be visible but not out of place, as there are many existing poles, towers, and conductors. Proposed poles would extend into the skyline; however, this view would be perpendicular to the direction of travel, and exposure would be minimal. As a result, the visual quality would be slightly lower than what currently exists, resulting in a low visual impact (-0.75); impacts would be less than significant. See the analysis matrices in Appendix 4.1-A for numerical calculations.

Figure 4.1-20: Key View 2: View Looking North at SR-125/Otay Lakes Road

BEFORE



AFTER*

*Based on preliminary engineering design. Exact pole heights may vary depending on field conditions.

Key View 3

Figure 4.1-21 shows the location of Key Views 3 and 4. Figure 4.1-22 shows the "before" and "after" views of Key View 3, looking southwest at the proposed Transmission Corridor from Sunset View Park. This view of the Transmission Corridor is typically seen by recreational viewers, and would remain with the Proposed Project. Existing park facilities and fields are visible in the middleground and foreground, and would remain with the Proposed Project.

The primary change in the "after" view would be the addition of a directly embedded pole south of the existing transmission tower, along with its associated power lines. Recreational viewers who frequent the park are considered the viewer group with moderate sensitivity to changes within the Transmission Corridor.

Figure 4.1-21: Key Views 3 & 4

Views of existing development are improved park land in the foreground and residential to the north and south. No completely natural land views exist from this view point. Due to the developed nature of the foreground, along with surrounding development and existing steel towers and poles visible from the observation point, the inclusion of new poles would have a minimal impact on visual quality. There are already a considerable number of existing towers, poles, and conductors, so although the proposed poles would extend into the skyline, their impact on the quality of the view would be slight. Since this view would be from a park, viewing duration would be longer. As a result, the visual quality would be lower than what currently exists, resulting in a low visual impact (-2.25). Impacts would be less than significant. See the analysis matrices in Appendix 4.1-A for numerical calculations.

Figure 4.1-22: Key View 3: View Looking Southwest at Sunset View Park

BEFORE

AFTER*

*Based on preliminary engineering design. Exact pole heights may vary depending on field conditions.

Key View 4

Figure 4.1-23 shows the "before" and "after" views looking southeast at the proposed Transmission Corridor from Olympic Parkway. Olympic Parkway at this location is a designated Scenic Roadway. This view of the Transmission Corridor is typically seen by residents, pedestrians, and passing motorists. The existing access road to the Transmission Corridor from Olympic Parkway and the base of an existing transmission tower are visible in the foreground.

A proposed 69-kV power line and associated poles would be constructed east of the existing 230-kV steel lattice tower transmission line and the existing 69-kV power pole line. This would impact the background, middleground, and foreground. Since pole additions would occur within the existing Transmission Corridor, the Proposed Project would represent a minor visual change that would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the site. Although the proposed poles and power line appear fairly significant in this view, the reality is that most motorists would not perceive the proposed poles as much as the still image indicates. The average speed is approximately 35 miles per hour (mph), and motorists would need to look perpendicular to their direction of travel to see this view; even then, this view would only be perceivable for a few seconds.

Due to the surrounding area's developed nature and existing steel towers visible from the observation point, inclusion of new poles and conductors would have a minimal impact on the visual quality. Due to the distance from existing towers to new poles, poles would be visible but would not seem out of place, as there are many existing poles, towers, and conductors. The proposed poles would extend into the already disrupted skyline view. A distant view of mountains would be slightly impacted; however, this view would be perpendicular to the direction of travel, so exposure would be minimal. As a result, visual quality would be slightly lower than what currently exists, resulting in a low visual impact (-2.25). Impacts would be less than significant. See the analysis matrices in Appendix 4.1-A for numerical calculations.

Figure 4.1-23: Key View 4: View Southeast at Olympic Parkway/Transmission Corridor

BEFORE

AFTER*

*Based on preliminary engineering design. Exact pole heights may vary depending on field conditions.

Key View 5

Figure 4.1-24 shows the locations of Key Views 5 through 10. Figure 4.1-25 shows the "before" and "after" views looking north at the proposed Transmission Corridor from Windingwalk Park. This view of the Transmission Corridor is typically seen by park visitors. Existing residential uses are visible in the background and would remain with the Proposed Project. The existing Transmission Corridor and park facilities are visible in the middleground and would remain with the Proposed Project. An existing ball field is visible in the foreground and would remain with for the Proposed Project.

The primary change in the "after" view would be the addition of directly embedded poles adjacent to the existing transmission towers and their associated power lines to the middleground. Since pole additions would occur within the existing Transmission Corridor, the Proposed Project would represent a minor visual change that would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the site. Recreational views of the Proposed Project would be temporary and would not be substantially different from the existing environment.

Figure 4.1-24: Key Views 5 through 10

Figure 4.1-25: Key View 5: View Looking North at Windingwalk Park

BEFORE

AFTER*

*Based on preliminary engineering design. Exact pole heights may vary depending on field conditions.

Existing development is improved park land in the foreground and residential to the northeast and east. A view of San Miguel Mountain is in the background. Due to the surrounding area's developed nature, along with existing steel towers and poles visible from the observation point,

inclusion of new poles would have a minimal impact on the visual quality, and would not greatly impact the views of San Miguel Mountain. Proposed poles would extend into skyline views, but because there are already a considerable number of existing towers, poles, and conductors, the proposed poles would be congruent with the existing visual environment. As a result, the visual quality would be lower than what currently exists, resulting in a low visual impact (-2.50). Impacts would be less than significant. See the analysis matrices in Appendix 4.1-A for numerical calculations.

Key View 6

Figure 4.1-26 shows the "before" and "after" views of the Proposed Project looking southeast at the proposed Transmission Corridor from Windingwalk Street. This view of the Transmission Corridor is typically seen by residents, pedestrians, and passing motorists. San Miguel Mountain and the existing Transmission Corridor are visible in the background, and would remain with the Proposed Project. In the City of Chula Vista, views of San Miguel Mountain are designated as a scenic vista. The existing Transmission Corridor and residential uses are visible in the middleground and would remain with the Proposed Project. The existing dirt access road to the Transmission Corridor from Windingwalk Street and the base of an existing transmission tower are visible in the foreground. The proposed 69-kV power line and associated poles would be constructed east of the existing 230-kV steel lattice tower transmission line and the existing 69-kV power pole line. This would slightly impact the already disrupted background, middleground, and foreground.

Since pole additions would occur within the existing Transmission Corridor, the Proposed Project would represent a minor visual change that would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the site. Views of existing development are residential to the east and west. Due to the surrounding area's developed nature and the existing steel towers visible from the observation point, adding new poles and conductors would have a minimal impact on visual quality. Due to the distance from existing towers to new poles, poles would be visible but not out of place, as there are many existing poles, towers, and conductors. Proposed poles would extend into the already disrupted skyline view. A distant view of mountains would be impacted; however, this view is perpendicular to the direction of travel, and exposure would be minimal. As a result, the visual quality would be slightly lower than what currently exists, resulting in a low visual impact (-2.25). Impacts would be less than significant. See the analysis matrices in Appendix 4.1-A for numerical calculations.

Figure 4.1-26: Key View 6: View Looking Southeast along Transmission Corridor

BEFORE

AFTER*

*Based on preliminary engineering design. Exact pole heights may vary depending on field conditions.

Key View 7

Figure 4.1-27 shows the "before" and "after" views of the Proposed Project looking east at the proposed Salt Creek Substation site and Transmission Corridor from Hunte Parkway and Journey Way. Hunte Parkway at this location is a designated Scenic Roadway. This view of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site and Transmission Corridor is typically seen by pedestrians and, to a lesser degree, passing motorists. This is one of the most highly visible and clear viewpoints of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site that currently exists from the perspective of pedestrians and motorists. A view of San Miguel Mountain and the existing Transmission Corridor is visible in the background and would remain with the Proposed Project. Hunte Parkway streetlights and undeveloped land are visible in the middleground and would remain with the Proposed Project. Hunte Parkway Trail and a landscaped slope are visible in the foreground and would remain with the Proposed Project.

The primary changes in the "after" view would occur in the middleground and foreground. The middleground would add the proposed Salt Creek Substation with its perimeter wall and landscaping; however, since the proposed Salt Creek Substation would be located below grade of Hunte Parkway, the residential viewers would have a limited view of the proposed Salt Creek Substation. Proposed landscaping in the foreground would assist in partially screening the proposed Salt Creek Substation from east-facing views along Hunte Parkway. However, a majority of the proposed Salt Creek Substation would be visible from this view. Viewers walking, jogging, or cycling would see the proposed Salt Creek Substation as they travel along Hunte Parkway Trail.

The middleground would include three new cable poles adjacent to the existing transmission towers and with their associated power lines; however, since these pole additions would occur within the existing Transmission Corridor, the Proposed Project would represent a minor visual change that would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the site. With implementation of Proposed Project design features (landscape concept plan and perimeter wall), adverse impacts to the visual character and quality of the site would be minimized. Natural colors and native landscaping would help minimize visual contrasts and provide some visual integration. Also, the distant background view of San Miguel Mountain would be more visually dominant than the foreground from the perspective of these viewers.

Views of existing development are residential to the east and west. Due to the surrounding area's developed nature and existing steel towers visible from the observation point, new poles and conductors would have a minimal impact on visual quality. Due to the distance from existing towers to new poles, poles would be visible but not out of place, as there are many existing poles, towers, and conductors. The proposed poles would extend into the already disrupted skyline view. A distant view of mountains would be impacted; however, this view would be perpendicular to the direction of travel and exposure would be minimal. As a result, the visual quality would be slightly lower than what currently exists, resulting in a moderate visual impact (-4.88). Impacts would be less than significant. See the analysis matrices in Appendix 4.1-A for numerical calculations.

Figure 4.1-27: Key View 7: View Looking East at Hunte Parkway/Journey Way

BEFORE

AFTER*

*Based on preliminary engineering design. Exact pole heights may vary depending on field conditions.

Key View 8

Figure 4.1-28 shows the "before" and "after" views of the Proposed Project looking southeast at the proposed Salt Creek Substation site and Transmission Corridor from Hunte Parkway and Exploration Falls Drive. Hunte Parkway at this location is a designated Scenic Roadway. This view of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site and Transmission Corridor would typically be seen by residents, pedestrians, and passing motorists. A view of the hillsides is visible in the background and would remain with the Proposed Project. The existing Transmission Corridor and undeveloped land are visible in the middleground and would remain with the Proposed Project. Hunte Parkway Trail is visible in the foreground and would remain with the Proposed Project.

The "after" view illustrates that a minor change would occur to the view from this location. The proposed Salt Creek Substation would be located approximately 45 to 50 feet below grade of Hunte Parkway, and would not be visible from this location, but the upper portions of three proposed poles would be visible.

Views of existing development are residential to the east and west. Due to the surrounding area's developed nature and existing steel towers visible from the observation point, new poles and conductors would have a minimal impact on the visual quality. Due to the distance from existing towers to new poles, poles would be visible but not out of place, as there are many existing poles, towers, and conductors. Proposed poles would extend into the already disrupted skyline view. A distant view of mountains would be impacted; however, this view would be perpendicular to the direction of travel, and exposure would be minimal. As a result, the visual quality would be slightly lower than existing, resulting in a low visual impact (-1.75). Impacts would be less than significant.

Figure 4.1-28: Key View 8: View Looking Southeast at Hunte Parkway/Exploration Falls Drive

BEFORE

AFTER*

*Based on preliminary engineering design. Exact pole heights may vary depending on field conditions.

Key View 9

Figure 4.1-29 shows the "before" and "after" views of the Proposed Project looking southeast at the proposed Transmission Corridor from Hunte Parkway. Hunte Parkway at this location is a designated Scenic Roadway. This view of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site and existing Transmission Corridor would typically be seen by residents, pedestrians, and passing motorists. San Miguel Mountain, a scenic vista, is visible in the background. The existing Transmission Corridor and undeveloped land are visible in the middleground and would remain with the Proposed Project. An existing access road to the Transmission Corridor from Hunte Parkway is visible in the foreground.

The primary change in this "after" view would be the addition of the proposed Salt Creek Substation and cable poles, along with their associated power lines, to the middleground and foreground. Pole additions would occur within the existing Transmission Corridor and would represent a minor visual change that would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the site. The middleground would exhibit a visual change by adding the proposed Salt Creek Substation with its perimeter wall and screened landscaping; however, since the proposed Salt Creek Substation would be located below grade of Hunte Parkway, residential viewers on the opposite side of Hunte Parkway would have a limited view of the substation. Recreational viewers walking, jogging, or cycling would see the proposed Salt Creek Substation primarily as they travel along the OVRP Proposed Trail and Hunte Parkway Trail. These viewers would experience moderate sensitivity to visual changes. Although the amount of time recreational viewers walking, jogging, or cycling along the trails and viewing the proposed Salt Creek Substation would be limited, these viewers would notice visual changes in this area, and viewer sensitivity is considered moderate. With implementation of Proposed Project design features (including contour grading, building material colors, a landscape concept plan, and perimeter wall), adverse impacts to the visual character and quality of the site would be minimized.

Existing views are predominantly of unimproved open space to the south, distant mountains, and Mexico beyond. The bulk of the substation improvements would be visible from this view, but would be minimized by use of natural contour grading on slopes, naturally colored building materials, and native landscaping that provides screening and blends in with the surrounding native environment. Due to the degree of landform change, impacts to the visual quality would occur, but with contour grading incorporated as the method of alteration, the change would only be moderate (-6.5). These impacts would be considered less than significant. See the analysis matrices in Appendix 4.1-A for numerical calculations.

Figure 4.1-29: Key View 9: View Looking Southeast at Hunte Parkway/Transmission Corridor

BEFORE

AFTER*

*Based on preliminary engineering design. Exact pole heights may vary depending on field conditions.

Key View 10

Figure 4.1-30 shows the "before" and "after" views of the Proposed Project looking south at the proposed Salt Creek Substation site and proposed Transmission Corridor from Hunte Parkway and Hidden Path Drive. Hunte Parkway at this location is a designated Scenic Roadway. This view of the Transmission Corridor is typically seen by pedestrians along the Hunte Parkway Trail. Hillsides and the existing Transmission Corridor are visible in the background. Undeveloped land is visible in the middleground. The Hunte Parkway trail is visible in the foreground.

The "after" view illustrates that the Proposed Project would not be visually incongruent or obtrusive from this viewpoint. As such, no impact would occur from this location. See the analysis matrices in Appendix 4.1-A for numerical calculations.

Figure 4.1-30: Key View 10: View Looking South at Hunte Parkway/Hidden Path Drive

BEFORE

AFTER*

*Based on preliminary engineering design. Exact pole heights may vary depending on field conditions.

Key View 11

Figure 4.1-31 shows the location of Key View 11. Figure 4.1-32 shows the "before" and "after" views of the Proposed Project looking northwest at the proposed Salt Creek Substation and Transmission Corridor from an access road within OVRP open space overlooking Salt Creek Canyon. This view of the Transmission Corridor is typically seen by pedestrians or hikers. However, the proposed substation site is not visible from the Salt Creek Canyon bottom where the California Riding and Hiking Trail is located. The existing Transmission Corridor and residential uses are visible in the background. An existing dirt access road to the Transmission Corridor is visible in the middleground. Hillsides and the existing Transmission Corridor are visible in the foreground.

Figure 4.1-31: Key View 11: View Looking Northwest from Elevated OVRP Access Road

Figure 4.1-32: Key View 11: View Looking Northwest at Access Road/Open Space

BEFORE

AFTER* (Only the substation is shown in color for clarity)

*Based on preliminary engineering design. Exact pole heights may vary depending on field conditions.

The primary change in this "after" view would be the addition of the proposed Salt Creek Substation within the middleground, approximately 3,200 feet away from the viewer. The Proposed Project would represent a minor visual change that would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the site because the substation and proposed poles would be quite a distance from the key view location. Pedestrians and hikers would have some sensitivity to the visual appearance of the substation and surrounding area. However, the color of the proposed building materials, landscaping, and natural contour grading around the substation would greatly minimize any visual intrusion. Poles would barely be visible from this distance.

Existing views are predominantly of unimproved open space (OVRP) to the north and distant developed areas (Otay Ranch) north of the OVRP. San Miguel Mountain is visible in the distance to the northeast. This is a scenic view from within the OVRP. Although the new substation would be visible from this view, it would be so far away, its visual impact would be minimal. In addition, the color of the proposed building materials, use of natural contour grading on slopes, and use of native landscaping that provides screening would blend in with the surrounding native environment. Because of the distance from the viewer to the substation, visual quality would only be slightly lower than what currently exists, resulting in a low visual impact (-1.88). Therefore, impacts would be less than significant. See the analysis matrices in Appendix 4.1-A for numerical calculations.

Question 4.1(c) – Scenic Resources within a State Scenic Highway

Construction and Operation and Maintenance – No Impact

There are no state-designated scenic highways in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Project area. SR-125 between SR-94 and Interstate 8 (I-8) is the nearest identified officially designated state scenic highway, located more than 9 miles north of the Proposed Project site. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not lie within the viewshed of any state-designated scenic highway and no impacts would occur.

Question 4.1(d) – New Light or Glare

Construction – Less-than-Significant Impact

No night construction is proposed. However, the possibility exists that work would occasionally extend into the evening hours, necessitating temporary lighting. In this case, lighting would be used to the extent required by safety and operational needs. Lighting would consist of portable floodlights powered by a generator. The floodlights would be operated as needed in focused work areas, and would be directed away from adjacent land uses, particularly residential areas and native habitat. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Operations and Maintenance – Less-than-Significant Impact

The Proposed Project area includes existing electric power, distribution, and substation facilities that are visible within the public viewshed. These existing facilities constitute the baseline from which impacts were measured. Neither the existing nor proposed power line facilities include any permanent lighting. Potential glare from overhead conductors would be similar to what

currently exists within the Proposed Project area. The new weathering steel poles are made of dull, nonreflective steel that does not create glare.

Outdoor lighting for the Salt Creek Substation would be restricted to use of a high-pressure sodium light at the entry gate. The light would be pole-mounted at an approximate height of 8 feet. Other lighting would be used within the limits of the substation and would be used during emergencies only to allow for inspection and repairs. Lighting will follow SDG&E standards to provide safe entry and exit, and to allow for safe driving within the substation site. As such, the Proposed Project would not create a substantial new source of light or glare, and impacts would be considered less than significant.

4.1.5 Summary of Project Impacts

Overall, the Proposed Project would not substantially alter the area's visual character. The proposed Salt Creek Substation site would undergo the most visual change because the natural topography of this undeveloped site would be altered into a graded area, and it would be developed with new substation structures and elements. However, the natural color of building materials, contour grading, native landscaping, and a perimeter wall would all minimize the potential impacts from changes at the site. Pedestrians, hikers, and those walking along Hunte Parkway Trail and the OVRP Proposed Trail would have moderate sensitivity related to the visual changes implemented with the Proposed Project. However, the duration of their views would be relatively short. The Proposed Project area lies within an existing Transmission Corridor with overhead power lines and towers, and adding a new power line within the existing Transmission Corridor would have a relatively minor change in the corridor's visual character. Because one 230-kV transmission line with large steel lattice towers and one 69-kV power line exist within the Transmission Corridor, the addition of a third power line with narrow steel poles would be visually congruent within the urbanized area. Changes at the Existing Substation would be relatively minor and would occur within the current substation fenced area, resulting in a minor change on the existing visual character of the area. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

4.1.6 Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operations Restrictions

With implementation of Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operations Restrictions, including implementation of the conceptual landscape plan, and use of natural-colored building materials, contour grading, and perimeter screening wall, potential impacts to aesthetics would remain less than significant.

4.1.7 Applicant-Proposed Measures

Because implementation of the Proposed Project would result in less-than-significant impacts to aesthetics, no APMs are required.

4.1.8 Detailed Discussion of Significant Impacts

No significant impacts have been identified.

4.1.9 References

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