



## NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND NOTICE OF SCOPING MEETING

**Date:** March 7, 2022

**To:** Agencies and interested parties

**Lead agency:** SMUD  
6201 S Street, MS B203  
Sacramento, CA 95817-1899  
Contact: Rob Ferrera at (916) 732-6676

**Subject:** Cordova Park Underground Cable Replacement Project Environmental Impact Report

**Review period:** March 7, 2022 to April 6, 2022

SMUD replaces aging electrical infrastructure as part of its routine maintenance and upgrade protocols. Accordingly, SMUD proposes to install approximately 0.6 miles of 12 kilovolt (kV) underground cable, approximately 2.12 miles of 69kV underground cable and up to 13 new utility vaults in the City of Rancho Cordova, near the location of existing 12kV and 69kV underground cables that are approaching the end of their operational lives. Installation of the new cable, conduit and utility vaults would be done by open trenching. Where possible, the new conduit will be installed to align with the existing cable, which would be abandoned in place.

As the lead agency for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance, SMUD is responsible for considering whether to certify the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and determining if the project should be approved. SMUD will prepare an EIR to satisfy the requirements of the CEQA Public Resources Code (PRC) (Section 21000 et seq.)

**Purpose of notice:** In accordance with CEQA, SMUD is distributing this notice of preparation (NOP) to solicit comments on the scope of the EIR that is being prepared for the Cordova Park Underground Cable Replacement Project.

This NOP has been prepared pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines, 14 California Code of Regulations Sections 15082 and 15083. The release of this NOP starts a 30-day public scoping period that begins on March 7, 2022 and ends on April 6, 2022. The purpose of the NOP is to provide sufficient information describing the proposed project and its potential environmental effects to allow agencies and interested parties the opportunity to

provide a meaningful response regarding the scope and content of the EIR, including possible environmental impacts, mitigation measures and alternatives.

**Project location:** The project is in the City of Rancho Cordova (see Figure 1). The proposed 12kV path begins at SMUD's Cordova Park Substation located near the intersection of Ambassador Drive and Trails Court. The 12kV path travels to Ambassador Drive where it follows the road for approximately 0.6 miles until it connects to existing riser poles just east of Ellison Drive.

The proposed 69kV path begins on the northwest side of Coloma Road, approximately 200 feet southeast of Sierra Madre Court. The 69kV path heads northwest from Coloma Road, crossing through the property of Mills Middle School and Cordova High School, until it connects to SMUD's Cordova Park Substation. From the substation, the 69kV path heads northeast nearly adjacent to, but outside, the backyards of homes facing Ambassador Drive until it reaches Rossmoor Drive. At Rossmoor Drive, the 69kV path turns and heads north towards the American River. The 69kV path stays along Rossmoor Drive until its termination near the American River, when the 69kV path connects to existing riser poles located between the boundaries of Rossmoor Drive and the American River. The proposed 69kV path is approximately 2.12 miles in length.

The existing 12kV and 69kV lines that run through the American River Parkway would be abandoned in place, and new conduit containing the new lines would be installed in separate trenches within the paths described above. The proposed 12kV and 69kV paths are highly disturbed due to vehicle traffic, including areas of pavement and dirt. There are residences adjacent to portions of the proposed 12kV and 69kV paths. Along Ambassador Drive, the 12kV circuit would be installed beneath existing roadways, sidewalks, or curbs and gutters. Along Rossmoor Drive, the 69kV circuit would be installed beneath existing pavement or within an existing fuel break adjacent to the pavement.

**Project objectives:** SMUD's objectives for the proposed project are to:

- Provide safe and reliable electrical service to existing and proposed development in the Rancho Cordova area.
- Facilitate efficient maintenance of underground cables and infrastructure.
- Maximize the use of available SMUD property and resources.
- Minimize impacts to nearby sensitive receptors.
- Minimize potential conflicts with existing planning efforts within the City of Rancho Cordova.

Figure 1: Project location

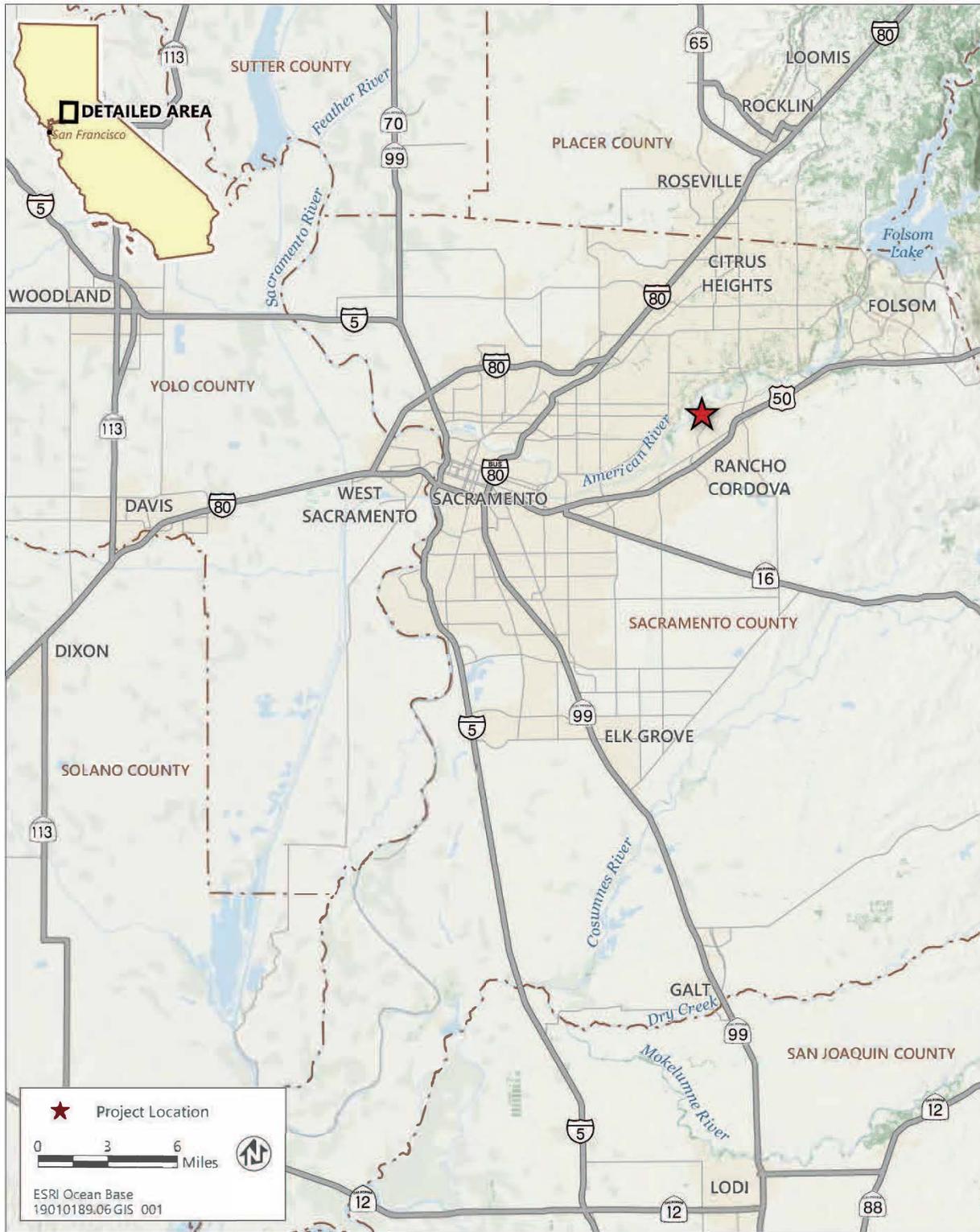


Figure 2: Project paths



**Proposed project:** The project involves the installation of approximately 0.6 miles of new underground 12kV electrical lines (cable) and approximately 2.12 miles of new underground 69kV cable to replace existing underground 12kV and 69kV cable buried directly in the ground (direct-buried) that was installed in the 1970s. The new 12kV cable also would be direct-buried while the new 69kV cable would be installed in conduits housed in concrete-encased duct banks to provide pathways and adequate spacing. The proposed project also involves installation of up to 13 new utility vaults along the 69kV path to allow access for electric cable pulling, splicing and maintenance.

The existing direct-buried 12kV cable begins at SMUD's Cordova Park Substation and extends approximately 0.6 miles east, where it connects to existing riser poles.

The existing direct-buried 69kV cable begins on the northwest side of Coloma Road, approximately 200 feet southeast of Sierra Madre Court, and extends north across the eastern property lines of Mills Middle School, Cordova High School and Hagen Park until it enters SMUD's Cordova Park Substation located near the intersection of Ambassador Drive and Trails Court (approximately 0.45 miles). From SMUD's substation, the existing 69kV cable extends east beneath a dirt path for approximately 0.70 miles when it turns north and cuts across the American River Parkway towards the American River for approximately 0.75 miles. Note that the total existing 69kV path is approximately 1.9 miles and the proposed 69kV path is approximately 2.12 miles. The extra mileage is due to deviating from the existing route to align with Rossmoor Drive.

Since installation of the existing 12kV and 69kV cable in the 1970s, native trees have established within the existing path along the Parkway. SMUD has coordinated with Sacramento County to install the new conduit outside of the existing path to avoid potential impacts to these trees and other biological resources within the American River Parkway and to facilitate easier access for future maintenance.

Accordingly, SMUD proposes to direct-bury the new 12kV cable beneath the pavement, sidewalks, or curbs and gutters of Ambassador Drive. The proposed 69kV path would deviate from the existing path by continuing east until it heads north at Rossmoor Drive. While the exact location of the 69kV path along Rossmoor Drive is not yet known and would be determined once existing utilities beneath the pavement are identified, the 69kV path would generally be within Rossmoor Drive or the fuel break immediately west of the pavement. The 69kV path would continue along Rossmoor Drive as it intersects with the American River Parkway bike trail and continue beyond the edge of pavement at the end of Rossmoor Drive. The 69kV path would connect to existing riser poles located between the boundaries of Rossmoor Drive and the edge of the American River. Within the American River Parkway, the existing direct-buried 69kV cable would be abandoned in place.

The project would include up to 13 utility vaults to be installed at various points along the 69kV path. The proposed utility vaults would consist of pre-cast concrete, measuring 8 feet x 14 feet x 8 feet inside, requiring an excavation area of approximately 15 feet x 20 feet x 15 feet, and would generally be spaced evenly throughout the path to allow for cable pulling, splicing and maintenance.

Construction activities would occur in two phases. Phase 1 would include the 12kV path, while Phase 2 would include the 69kV path and utility vaults. Construction for Phase 1 is anticipated take up to 3 months and would begin in the summer of 2022. Phase 2 construction would take approximately 12 months once initiated and is anticipated to begin in the next 5 to 7 years. Construction activities would occur during hours identified in City of Rancho Cordova Zoning Code Section 6.68.090(E). If there is a need for work

to occur outside of these hours, SMUD will provide additional notification to customers adjacent to the project boundary.

Most construction would include open trenching to a maximum depth of 7 feet, though some deeper excavation may be necessary to avoid conflicts with existing utility lines. Removing water from the construction area (dewatering) may be necessary due to the high water-table of the area. SMUD would use Baker tanks and/or filtration bags, if needed, to treat water prior to discharge into the existing storm drain system in a manner consistent with regulatory requirements. For the 12kV path, the 12kV cable would be direct-buried in the trenches. The 69kV electrical cable would be placed in a duct bank, which is a series of conduits encased in concrete. The trenches would then be backfilled with a cement-like slurry mixture or compacted aggregate base to the roadway subgrade elevation followed by replacement of the appropriate cover (e.g., pavement or dirt). Construction activities would generally be conducted in existing pathways or along the roadway and would include the temporary closure of footpaths and roads. Alternative routes of travel will be provided where feasible. Following construction activities each day, the open trenches would be covered, and equipment removed to allow safe use of footpaths and roadways.

**Potential approvals and permits required:** Elements of the project could be subject to permitting and/or approval authority of other agencies. Potential permits required from other agencies could include:

*State*

- **California Department of Transportation:** Permits for movement of oversized or excessive loads on state highways.

*Local*

- **Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD):** Authority to Construct/Permit to Operate pursuant to SMAQMD Regulation 2 (Rule 201 et seq.).
- **City of Rancho Cordova:**
  - Tree removal permit.
  - Encroachment permit.
- **County of Sacramento:** Encroachment permit.

**Probable environmental effects:** The EIR will describe the significant direct and indirect potential environmental impacts of the project. It also will evaluate the potential cumulative impacts of the project, defined as impacts that could be created as a result of the combination of the proposed project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects causing related impacts. While not required by CEQA, the EIR will present a discussion of environmental justice issues related to the proposed project. SMUD anticipates that the project could result in the following potentially

significant environmental effects, which will be assessed and discussed in detail in the EIR. Feasible and practicable mitigation measures will be recommended to reduce any identified significant impacts.

- **Tribal Cultural Resources:** Potential disturbance of tribal cultural resources. This issue will be addressed in the EIR.
- **Cultural Resources:** Potential disturbances of known and unknown historic and/or archaeological resources. This issue will be addressed in the EIR.

SMUD anticipates that the project would not result in significant environmental impacts in the following resource areas, which therefore will not be discussed in detail in the EIR. Evaluation of impacts to the following resources will be presented in an Initial Study, which will be appended to the EIR.

- **Aesthetics:** Where there are views of the American River and the adjacent American River Parkway, the proposed project would not change or degrade the existing visual character or introduce a new source of light or glare.
- **Agriculture and Forestry Resources:** The project would not result in any change in use or other physical environmental change to agricultural resources in the project area.
- **Air Quality:** Construction activities could result in emissions of criteria air pollutants and toxic air contaminants. SMUD will evaluate the anticipated construction emissions associated with the proposed project and adopt mitigation measures as necessary to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.
- **Biological Resources:** Construction activities could impact biological resources within the project paths. SMUD will evaluate the potential for effects on biological resources and adopt mitigation measures as necessary to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.
- **Energy:** The project would help SMUD provide safe and reliable electrical service to its customers, without creating new or increased energy demand or wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary energy consumption.
- **Geology and Soils:** Construction activities would disturb soil, possibly resulting in erosion or loss of topsoil. While effects related to seismicity may be possible, the project paths are in the Sacramento Valley, which has historically experienced a low level of seismic ground-shaking. Given the project's close proximity to the American River, it is possible that previously undiscovered paleontological resources could be discovered. SMUD will evaluate potential effects and adopt mitigation measures as necessary to reduce impacts.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Construction activities would result in the generation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the use of heavy-duty off-road construction equipment and vehicle use during worker commutes. SMUD will evaluate the

potential for generation of GHG emissions and adopt mitigation measures as necessary to reduce GHG impacts to a less-than-significant level.

- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** Construction activities would involve the use of hazardous materials, such as fuels, solvents, gasoline, asphalt and oil. SMUD will evaluate the potential for effects related to hazards and hazardous materials and adopt mitigation measures if needed to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality:** Project construction would involve earth-moving activities that could result in effects related to hydrology and water quality. Following construction, the project path would be returned to its pre-project condition.
- **Land Use and Planning:** The project would not physically divide and established community, nor would it conflict with land use plans, policies or regulations.
- **Mineral Resources:** The City of Rancho Cordova includes areas of identified mineral deposits. SMUD will evaluate whether the project would result in impacts related to mineral resources and would adopt mitigation measures if needed to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.
- **Noise and Vibration:** There would be temporary noise and vibration impacts related to construction equipment. Following construction, the project path would be returned to its pre-project conditions and would not include new sources of noise or vibration. SMUD will evaluate the potential for impacts related to noise and vibration that would occur during project construction and would adopt mitigation measures if needed to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.
- **Population and Housing:** The project would not generate any new residents in the area nor provide any new jobs within the Sacramento region.
- **Public Services:** The project would not generate any new residents to the area, so there would not be any effects related to fire protection, law enforcement, schools or other public services.
- **Recreation:** The project would not generate any new residents or recreational users in the area. Project construction activities could require temporary detours of local trails, but any detours would be removed following project construction. SMUD will evaluate the potential for impacts related to recreation that would occur during project construction and would adopt mitigation measures if needed to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.
- **Traffic and Transportation:** The project would generate new vehicle trips during construction activities and could cause temporary disruptions to the local roadway network. SMUD will evaluate potential impacts related to traffic and transportation and will adopt mitigation measures as necessary to ensure that impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

- **Utilities:** The project would install new conduit duct banks and manholes throughout the cable paths. The project would not require potable water, disposal of wastewater, or other utility use following project construction.
- **Wildfire:** While the project paths include areas of trees and brush, the project involves the underground installation of conduit duct banks and would not increase wildfire risk in the area.

**Comment period:** Written comments on the NOP can be sent anytime during the NOP review period, which begins March 7, 2022 and ends on April 6, 2022. Emailed comments must be received by 5 p.m. on April 6, 2022. Written comments must be postmarked no later than April 6, 2022. Please send your written or electronic (email) responses to the following address:

Rob Ferrera  
Sacramento Municipal Utility District  
Environmental Management  
P.O. Box 15830 MS B203  
Sacramento, CA 95852-1830  
[rob.ferrera@smud.org](mailto:rob.ferrera@smud.org)

Digital copies of the NOP are available at: **[smud.org/CordovaParkCableReplacement](https://smud.org/CordovaParkCableReplacement)**.  
Hard copies of the NOP are available for public review at the following locations:

Sacramento Municipal Utility District  
Customer Service Center  
6301 S Street  
Sacramento, CA 95817

Sacramento Municipal Utility District  
East Campus Operations Center  
4401 Bradshaw Road  
Sacramento, CA 95827

**Scoping meeting:** Comments on the NOP may also be provided during the virtual open house scoping meeting to be held **Thursday, March 24, 2022** at 5:30 p.m. During the scoping meeting, information on the proposed project and CEQA review process will be provided by SMUD. If you have questions regarding the NOP or the scoping meeting, please contact Rob Ferrera at the email address shown above. A link to access the scoping meeting is available at **[smud.org/CordovaParkCableReplacement](https://smud.org/CordovaParkCableReplacement)**.