Sacramento Municipal Utility District

Elverta/McClellan 69 kV Feeder Tie Project

Draft Initial Study and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration • May 2024

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Draft Initial Study and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration • May 2024

Lead Agency:

Sacramento Municipal Utility District
6201 S Street, Mail Stop B209
Sacramento, CA 95817

or

P.O. Box 15830 MS B209
Sacramento, CA 95852-1830
Attn: Jerry Park
(916) 732-7406 or jerry.park@smud.org

Prepared by:

Ascent Environmental
455 Capitol Mall, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95814
Contact: Marianne Lowenthal
marianne.lowenthal@ascent.inc

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ACRONYMS AND OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Assembly Bill
AFV	alternative fuel vehicles
agl	above ground level
AQAP	air quality attainment plan
B.P.	before present
BERD	Built Environment Resource Directory
BMP	best management practices
CAAP	Climate Action & Adaptation Plan
CAAQS	California ambient air quality standards
CAFE	Corporate Average Fuel Economy
Cal EPA	California Environmental Protection Agency's
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBC	California Building Code
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA Guide	Guide to Air Quality Assessment in Sacramento County
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	carbon monoxide
CO_2	carbon dioxide
COPD	chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
DAC	disadvantaged communities
dB	decibels
DOC	California Department of Conservation
DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
Draft IS/MND	Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
DSH	diameter at standard height
DTSC	California Department of Toxic Substances Control
EJ	environmental justice
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
EPAct	Energy Policy Act
ERCS	Environmental Resources and Customer Service
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FAA	Federal Aviation Regulations
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
GGRF	Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund
GHG	greenhouse gas
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agencies
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
H_2S	hydrogen sulfide
I-80	Interstate 80

IEPR	Integrated Energy Policy Report
IPaC	Information, Planning, and Consultation System
kV	kilovolt
lb/day	pounds per day
L_{eq}	Equivalent Continuous Sound Level
L_{max}	Maximum Sound Level
MMRP	mitigation monitoring and reporting program
mpg	miles per gallon
mph	miles per hour
MRZ	Mineral Resource Zones
MT	metric tons
$MTCO_2e$	metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent
NAAQS	national ambient air quality standards
NCIC	North Central Information Center
NHD	National Hydrography Dataset
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
NO_2	nitrogen dioxide
NOI	Notice of Intent
NO_X	oxides of nitrogen
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
O_3	ozone
OPR	Governor's Office of Planning and Research's
Pb	lead
PM_{10}	particulate matter which is categorized into particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter
$PM_{2.5}$	particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter
PPV	Peak Particle Velocity
PRC	Public Resources Code
Project	Elverta/McClellan 69 kV Feeder Tie Project
ROG	reactive organic gases
SB	Senate Bill
SGA	Sacramento Groundwater Authority
SMAQMD	Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District
SMUD	Sacramento Municipal Utility District
SNAHC	Sacramento Native American Health Center Inc.
SO_2	sulfur dioxide
SPL	sound pressure levels
SVAB	Sacramento Valley Air Basin
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	toxic air contaminants
tpy	tons/year
UAIC	United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
UST	underground storage tanks
VdB	vibration decibels
VMT	vehicle miles traveled

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Overview

The Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) proposes to replace approximately 5.5 miles of an existing above-ground 12-kilovolt (kV) cable with 69 kV and 12 kV cables. The Project would involve replacing or relocating approximately 140 power line poles, and newly installing approximately 10 power line poles where they did not previously exist. The Project alignment would occur in three phases: Phase 1, Phase 2A, and Phase 2B. The southern end of Phase 1 would be located near the intersection of Winters Street and Rene Avenue. It would run north along Winters, turn west onto Dean Street, north along Patrol Road, then west along Ascot Avenue to 20th Street. Phase 2A would be located along 20th Street, from Ascot to Q Street. Phase 2B would be located along Elkhorn Boulevard from 20th Street to 34th Street. All of the new poles would be located within Phase 1 of the Project alignment.

1.2 Purpose of Document

This Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (Draft IS/MND) has been prepared by SMUD to evaluate potential environmental effects resulting from the Elverta/McClellan 69 kV Feeder Tie Project (Project). Chapter 2, “Project Description,” presents the detailed Project information.

This document has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15000 et seq.). Under CEQA, an IS can be prepared by a lead agency to determine if a project may have a significant effect on the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15063[a]), and thus to determine the appropriate environmental document. For this Project, the lead agency has prepared the following analysis that identifies potential physical environmental impacts and mitigation measures that would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level. SMUD is the lead agency responsible for complying with the provisions of CEQA.

In accordance with the provisions of CEQA, SMUD is distributing a Notice of Intent (NOI) to adopt an MND to solicit comments on the analysis and mitigation measures in the Draft IS/MND. The NOI will be distributed to property owners within 1,000 feet of the Project alignment, as well as to the State Clearinghouse/ Governor’s Office of Planning and Research and each responsible and trustee agency. The Draft IS/MND will be available for review and comment for a period of 30 days from May 13, 2024 to June 12, 2024.

Written comments must be received by close of business on June 12, 2024. Written comments should be addressed to:

SMUD–Environmental Services
P.O. Box 15830 MS B209
Sacramento, CA 95852-1830
Attn: Jerry Park

E-mail comments may be addressed to elvertamcclellanproject@smud.org. If you have questions regarding the NOI or Draft IS/MND, please call Jerry Park at (916) 732-7406.

Digital copies of the NOI and Draft IS/MND are available on the internet at: https://www.smud.org/Elverta-McClellan or https:www.smud.org/CEQA. Hardcopies of the NOI and Draft IS/MND are available for public review at the following locations:

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

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

1.3 Public Review Process

This Draft IS/MND is being circulated for a 30-day public comment period and is available at the locations identified above. The NOI is being distributed to all property owners within 1,000 feet of the Project alignment, as well as to the State Clearinghouse/ Governor's Office of Planning and Research and responsible and trustee agencies. The NOI identifies where the document is available for public review and invites interested parties to provide written comments for incorporation into a final IS/MND.

Following the 30-day public review period, a final IS/MND will be prepared, presenting written responses to comments received on significant environmental issues. Before SMUD's Board of Directors makes a decision on the Project, the final IS/MND will be provided to all parties commenting on the Draft IS/MND.

1.4 SMUD Board Approval Process

The SMUD Board of Directors must adopt the IS/MND and approve the mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP) before it can approve the Project. The Project and relevant environmental documentation will be formally presented at a SMUD Environmental Resources and Customer Service (ERCS) Committee meeting for information and discussion. The SMUD Board of Directors will then consider adopting the final IS/MND and MMRP at its next regular meeting. Meetings of the SMUD Board of Directors are generally held on the third Thursday of each month.

1.5 Document Organization

This Draft IS/MND is organized as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction. This chapter provides an introduction to the environmental review process and describes the purpose and organization of this document.

Chapter 2: Project Description. This chapter provides a detailed description of the Project.

Chapter 3: Environmental Checklist. This chapter presents an analysis of a range of environmental issues identified in the CEQA Environmental Checklist and determines if the Project would result in no impact, a less-than-significant impact, or a less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated. Where needed to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level, mitigation measures are presented.

Chapter 4: Environmental Justice Analysis. Although not required by CEQA, SMUD has elected to prepare an evaluation of potential environmental justice issues related to the Project.

Chapter 5: List of Preparers. This chapter lists the organizations and people that prepared the document.

Chapter 6: References. This chapter lists the references used in preparation of this Draft IS/MND.

1.6 Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

Impacts on the environmental factors below are evaluated using the checklist included in Chapter 3. SMUD determined that the environmental factors checked below would be less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures. It was determined that the unchecked factors would have a less-than-significant impact or no impact.

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Agriculture and Forestry Resources	☒ Air Quality
☒ Biological Resources	☒ Cultural Resources	☒ Geology / Soils
☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials	☐ Hydrology / Water Quality
☐ Land Use / Planning	☐ Mineral Resources	☐ Noise
☐ Population / Housing	☐ Public Services	☐ Recreation
☒ Transportation / Traffic	☒ Tribal Cultural Resources	☐ Utilities / Service Systems
☒ Mandatory Findings of Significance		

1.7 Determination

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project could not have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ I find that although the proposed project COULD have a significant effect on the environment, there WILL NOT be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Jerry Park	May 13, 2024
Signature	Date
Jerry Park	Environmental Management Specialist
Printed Name	Title
Sacramento Municipal Utility District	
Agency	

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

SMUD is proposing to replace approximately 5.5 miles of an existing above-ground 12 kV cable with 69 kV and 12 kV cables. The Project would involve replacing or relocating approximately 140 power line poles, and newly installing approximately 10 power line poles where they did not previously exist. The Project alignment is located in northern Sacramento County and the northwestern portion of the City of Sacramento. It would occur in three phases: Phase 1, Phase 2A, and Phase 2B. All of the new poles would be located within Phase 1.

2.1 Project Location

The Project alignment covers approximately 5.5 linear miles and is located along the western edge of the McClellan Air Business Park and northward within the community of Rio Linda in Sacramento County, within the boundaries of the City of Sacramento and Sacramento County (Figure 2-1). The Project alignment extends generally from a connection point approximately 140 feet south of the intersection of Winters Street and Rene Avenue, to the intersection of Q Street and 20th Street to the north, and the intersection of Elkhorn Boulevard and 34th Street to the east (see Figure 2-1). Between those points, the Project is generally located along the western and northern sides of the Sacramento McClellan Airport and through the community of Rio Linda.

As noted above, the Project alignment is generally divided into three phases: Phase 1, Phase 2A, and Phase 2B. The southern end of Phase 1 would be located near the intersection of Winters Street and Rene Avenue. It would run north along Winters, turn west onto Dean Street, north along Patrol Road, then west along Ascot Avenue to 20th Street. Continuing northward, Phase 2A would be located along 20th Street, from Ascot to Q Street. Extending east along Elkhorn Boulevard, Phase 2B would extend from 20th Street to 34th Street.

The Project alignment can be accessed from the south via Interstate 80 (I-80). The southern extent of the Project alignment begins approximately 0.3 miles north of the I-80 Winters Street on- and off-ramps; the eastern extent of the Project alignment is approximately 3.0 miles west of the I-80 Elkhorn Boulevard on- and off-ramps. Existing land uses surrounding the site consist of industrial areas located adjacent to the eastern and southern extent of the Project alignment, residential uses surrounding the northwest portion of the Project alignment, and the Sacramento McClellan Airport is located to the east and south of the Project alignment.

2.2 Project Objectives

The objectives of the Project are to:

- contribute to SMUD's goals for ensuring electrical service reliability,
- provide safe and reliable electrical service to existing and proposed development in the northern Sacramento County and City areas,
- provide greater operational flexibility between circuits,
- maximize the use of available SMUD property and resources, and
- minimize impacts to nearby sensitive receptors and sensitive natural communities.

2.3 Project Description

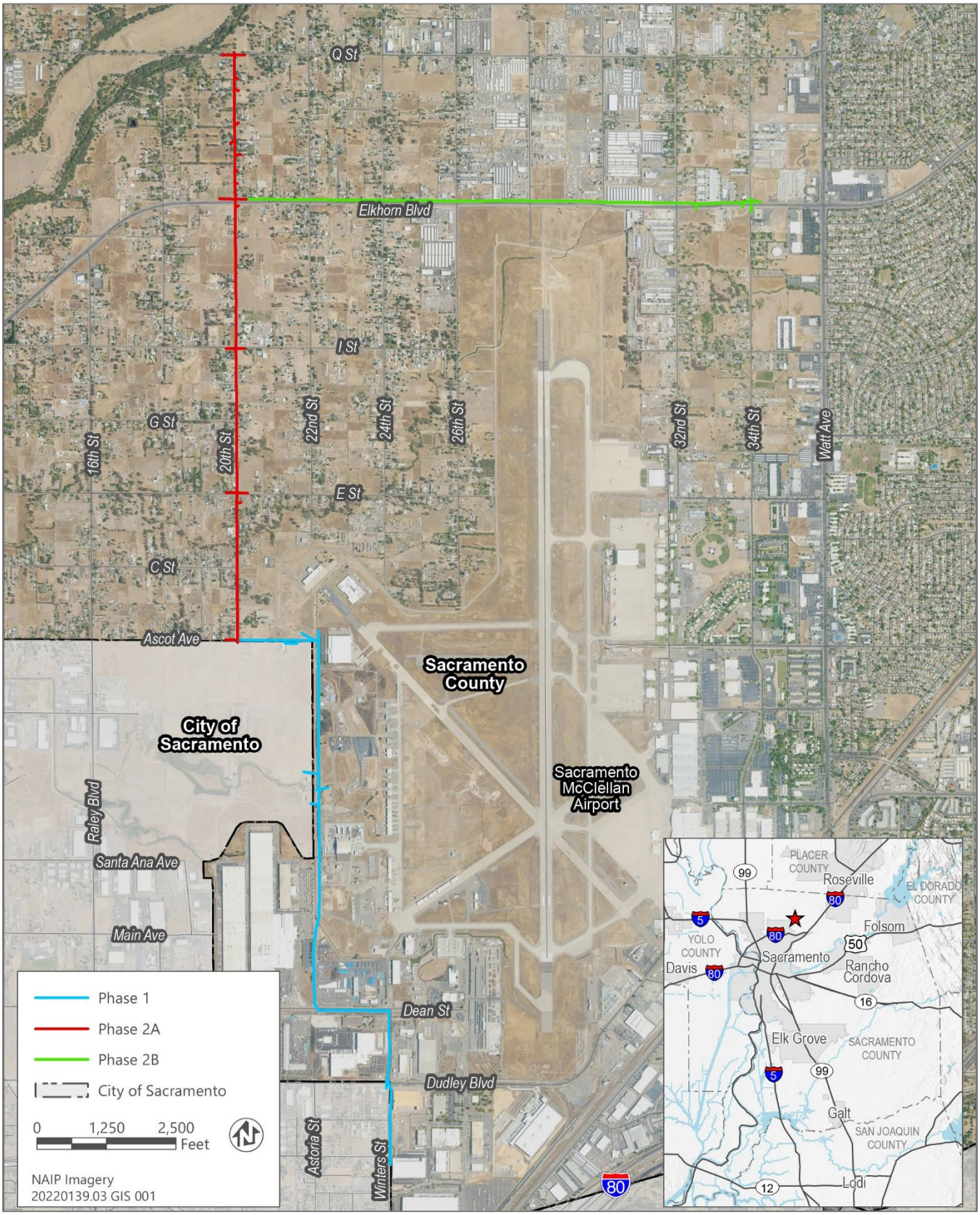
To provide more consistent and necessary capacity for existing and proposed development in the area, the Project involves upgrading SMUD's sub-transmission capacity along the western edge of McClellan Air Business Park, northward within the community of Rio Linda. Currently, the area is served by an existing 12 kV distribution line that extends from Dry Creek, southward along 20th Street to Ascot Avenue, before turning eastward and then southward again along the western boundary of McClellan Airport. As currently proposed, the majority of the existing 12 kV line would be replaced with a 69 kV double-circuit sub-transmission line and 12 kV underbuild (i.e., a higher and a lower voltage line sharing the same poles). This would involve the replacement or relocation of approximately 140 poles and the installation of 10 new poles along the Project alignment. Generally, poles would be located approximately 150-200 feet apart, or greater where space and terrain allows.

The Project involves three phases of development, hereafter described as Phase 1, Phase 2A, and Phase 2B. Phase 1 would occur south of Ascot Avenue and would be located adjacent to industrial land uses and the McClellan Sacramento Airport, whereas Phases 2A and 2B would occur within a more residential area within the community of Rio Linda. The Project alignment would primarily be located within the County of Sacramento, with the exception of four poles located along Ascot Road (two poles associated with Phase 1 and two poles associated with Phase 2A) that would be located within the City of Sacramento: The heights of the poles would vary by phase and where necessary to account for existing uses and specific siting considerations but would not exceed 70 feet in height above ground level (agl). The highest pole would be 90-feet tall, set in a 20-foot-deep hole (i.e., rising to 70 feet agl). Wood poles would generally be 70-feet tall, set in 9-foot-deep holes (i.e., would rise up to 61 feet agl).

Phase 1 of the Project covers the southern portion of the alignment and would start near the intersection of Winters Street and Rene Avenue. It would run north along Winters, turn west onto Dean Street, north along Patrol Road, then west along Ascot Avenue to 20th Street. Phase 1 of the Project would involve replacement or relocation of 65 poles, as well as installation of 7 new poles at the southern extent of Phase 1 where poles do not currently exist. New poles would also be installed on Patrol Road, where the alignment crosses from the west side to the east side. A total of 9 poles would be removed from Phase 1 of the alignment. Approximately 10 of the new poles would be metal and the remaining 62 poles would be wooden.

Phase 2A would be located along 20th Street, from Ascot to Q Street. Phase 2A would include a 12 kV underbuild and double-circuit 69 kV up to the intersection of 20th Street and Elkhorn. From that point to the north toward Q Street, the 69 kV would be single-circuit. Phase 2A of the Project would involve the replacement or relocation of 30 pole lines, with 6 poles being removed from the alignment. Approximately 18 of the installed poles would be steel and 22 poles would be wooden. As part of Phase 2A, the majority of wooden poles would be 70-feet tall, while the metal poles would be 76 feet tall. A 90-foot metal pole would be installed that would be stabilized using four ½-inch downward guy wires (raising up to 70 feet).

Phase 2B would be located along Elkhorn Boulevard from 20th Street to 34th Street and would consist of a 69 kV single-circuit and 12 kV underbuild from Elkhorn and 20th to Elkhorn and 34th. Phase 2B of the Project would involve a net total of 50 poles replaced in place, of which two would be steel and 48 would be wooden.



Source: Adapted by Ascent in 2023.

Figure 2-1 **Project Location**

2.3.1 Construction

Construction activities would take approximately 12 months and are expected to begin as early as Summer 2024. Generally, each steel pole would be installed over a period of two days, and wooden poles would be installed within one day. While construction activities may not be continuous along the Project alignment, they are expected to be completed by summer 2025. Construction would be conducted in a manner consistent with the relevant City and County construction related noise ordinances (i.e., City of Sacramento noise restrictions prohibit construction between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.; and Sacramento County noise restrictions occur from 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. on weekdays and 8:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. on weekends.)

As discussed above, the Project would involve the removal and replacement of both steel and wooden poles. Foundations for steel poles would be established in up to 20-foot-deep holes, excavated using a 3- to 5-foot diameter auger; foundations for wooden poles would be established in 9-foot-deep holes, excavated using a 3-foot diameter auger. As noted above, poles would be located approximately 150-200 feet apart, or greater where space and terrain allows. Staging of poles would generally occur within existing paved and disturbed areas, as well as on truck beds within a single roadway lane. Once augers holes have been established, a boom truck would be used to install individual poles, guided by one or more construction crews of approximately 5 people. With the pole in place, concrete would be used to secure the steel poles in place and rocks would be used to secure wooden poles. New power lines would be connected by construction workers using aerial bucket trucks. Poles would be self-supporting, apart from the 90-foot pole located at the corner of 20th and Ascot, which would be supported with six 0.5-inch down guy wires. Down guy wire would also be installed for other poles in the alignment, where they do not currently exist.

As noted above, construction activities would generally be conducted in roadway rights-of-way and would include the temporary closure of roads and sidewalks. Following construction activities each day, any open pits would be covered, and equipment removed to allow reopening of the lanes. In residential areas, there may be slight delays but no prolonged inaccessibility for residents.

2.4 Potential Permits and Approvals Required

Elements of the Project could be subject to permitting and/or approval authority of other agencies. As the lead agency pursuant to CEQA, SMUD is responsible for considering the adequacy of the IS/MND and determining whether the Project should be approved. The following agencies could require permits or approvals as part of Project implementation:

State

- **State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)/Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board** issues Construction Storm Water Discharge Permits for projects that disturb more than one acre of land. The permit would also require preparation and implementation of a stormwater pollution prevention plan that would specify storm water best management practices. In addition, SWRCB would review and approve dewatering plans, as appropriate.

- **California Department of Transportation** issues permits for movement of oversized or excessive loads on State Highways.

Local

- **Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD)** issues the Authority to Construct/Permit to Operate pursuant to SMAQMD Regulation 2 (Rule 201 et seq.).

- **Sacramento County** issues encroachment permits and approves traffic control plans and dewatering plans.

- **City of Sacramento** issues encroachment permits and approves traffic control plans.

McClellan Business Park is a privately managed business park within Sacramento County. For any work within property owned/managed by McClellan Business Park, LLC, SMUD would apply for encroachment/dig permits for soil disturbing activities within the boundaries of the McClellan Business Park.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT EVALUATION

3.0 Evaluation of Environmental Impacts

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except “No Impact” answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A “No Impact” answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).

2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.

3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. “Potentially Significant Impact” is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

4. “Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated” applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less-Than-Significant Impact.” The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less-than-significant level (mitigation measures from “Earlier Analyses,” as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).

5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

    a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.

    b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.

    c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are “Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated,” describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.

6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.

7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.

8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.

9. The explanation of each issue should identify:

    a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and

    b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

3.1 Aesthetics

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
I. Aesthetics				
Except as provided in Public Resources Code section 21099 (where aesthetic impacts shall not be considered significant for qualifying residential, mixed-use residential, and employment centers), would the Project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.1.1 Environmental Setting

Aesthetic resources are generally defined as both the natural and built features of the landscape that contribute to the public's experience and appreciation of the environment. Aesthetic impacts may occur depending on the extent to which a project's presence would negatively alter the perceived visual character and quality of the environment.

Character of Project Alignment

The Project alignment, defined in three phases (Phase 1, Phase 2A, and Phase 2B), covers approximately 5.5 miles and is located along the western edge of the McClellan Air Business Park and northward within the community of Rio Linda in Sacramento County, just outside of the northeast boundaries of the City of Sacramento. Land uses surrounding Phase 1 consist of a mix of residential and industrial development at the southern extent, the Sacramento McClellan Airport to the east, and vernal pool preserves along the northwestern extent. Areas surrounding Phase 2A are characterized as rural residential uses, including an existing preschool, located just north of the intersection of 20th Street and I Street. The western extent of Phase 2B is surrounded by rural residential uses that give way to industrial uses toward the east, and the Sacramento McClellan Airport is located south of the eastern end of the Phase 2B alignment.

View Within and From the Project Alignment

The alignment runs parallel to existing roadways and is visible to the public, as depicted in Figure 2-1. Thus, views of the Project alignment consist of the existing powerline, and the surrounding land uses, described above. The existing power line is supported by approximately 45-foot-tall wooden T-poles that support a three-phase (i.e., three wire) 12 kV system, which is horizontally

mounted in a parallel fashion. A static line is mounted above other utility lines on the vertical portion of the pole, approximately 20 feet agl. Other hardware typical of power lines are present along the existing pole alignment, including transformers and supportive guy wires. While the existing power line tends to blend in with industrial uses, it dominates roadway views within rural residential areas. Mature trees, including oaks, redwoods, and eucalyptus dot the alignment, and reach a similar height as the existing power line. Landscaping along the Project alignment is primarily associated with residential uses and includes a variety of other smaller and medium-height trees, shrubs, lawn areas, and open space. Fences are present along the majority of the alignment that borders residential uses. Private views are available from residences, businesses, and United States Military facilities located along the alignment (i.e., McClellan Airport).

Because the topography within the Project alignment is generally flat, views from the Project alignment to the surrounding area are generally limited to land uses immediately surrounding the alignment. However, distant views consist of the Sierra Nevada foothills to the east are visible from certain vantage points.

Scenic Resources

A scenic vista is generally defined as a distant public view along or through an opening or corridor that is recognized and valued for its scenic quality, or a natural or cultural resource that is indigenous to the area.

The *Sacramento County General Plan Update FEIR* designates the Sacramento River and its Delta, American River, Cosumnes River, Dry Creek, Morrison Creek, Laguna Creek, Elder Creek, Deer Creek, and Dry Creek South, including associated parkways, and important historic structures listed on the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources, California and/or National Registers as scenic resources (Sacramento County 2010:16-2). Of these identified scenic resources, the Project alignment is only visible from Dry Creek, which is located approximately 300 feet from the closest point of the Project alignment at the corner of Q Street and 20th Street. Dry Creek is lined with a thick riparian corridor along the waterway. Public access to Dry Creek is available from a single-track dirt trail and a paved bike path, which travel along the northern bank of the waterway.

There are no designated state scenic highways located adjacent to the Project alignment (Caltrans 2024). The nearest designated scenic roadway is Route 160, approximately 13 miles southwest of the Project area (Caltrans 2024).

3.1.2 Discussion

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

Less-than-Significant Impact. A scenic vista is generally defined as a distant public view along or through an opening or corridor that is recognized and valued for its scenic quality, or a natural or cultural resource that is indigenous to the area. Views in the Project vicinity are limited because of the flat terrain and the level of development/landscaping that preclude long-range views. Views along the Project alignment are short- to mid-range and typically reflect the urban character of the surroundings, which are not considered scenic vistas. The Project would involve altering the existing power line alignment, such that replacement poles would reach up to 70 feet tall. While the height of the replaced poles would be greater than the existing poles, and therefore visible from further away, they would not substantially affect the existing character

of the surrounding areas. That is, power lines are typical within rural residential and industrial uses and would not be considered an impediment to views of a scenic vista from these land use types. Therefore, the Project would have a ***less-than-significant*** impact related to a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, and no mitigation is required.

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Less-than-Significant Impact. As discussed above, under Section 3.1.1, "Environmental Setting," the closest scenic resource to the Project alignment is the Dry Creek Parkway, located approximately 300 feet from the closest point of the Project alignment at the intersection of Q Street and 20th Street within Phase 2A. The existing poles along Q Street are wooden and approximately 45 feet tall. Implementation of the Project would replace these wooden poles with steel poles that would rise approximately 55 feet agl. However, from public access points along Dry Creek, they would remain obscured to a similar degree as under the existing conditions. Furthermore, the presence of a power line, albeit fewer poles than under the existing condition, is already incorporated into the general aesthetic character of the alignment. Thus, it would not be adding a new element to the existing scenery from public access points along Dry Creek. Therefore, scenic resources would not be substantially damaged. This impact would be ***less than significant,*** and no mitigation is required.

c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Less-than-Significant Impact. During Project construction, views in the area would be modified as a result of the temporary presence of construction equipment and activities. However, the appearance of construction equipment and activities would be consistent with the developed nature of the Project alignment. Once construction activities are complete, the Project alignment would appear nearly identical to existing conditions, however the existing wooden poles would be replaced with a combination of new wooden and steel poles. Overall, the poles would be taller and equipped with additional lines compared to the existing conditions, but there would be fewer poles that would be placed farther apart from each other. Replacement of aging wood poles with new poles would generally maintain the same visual character as existing conditions.

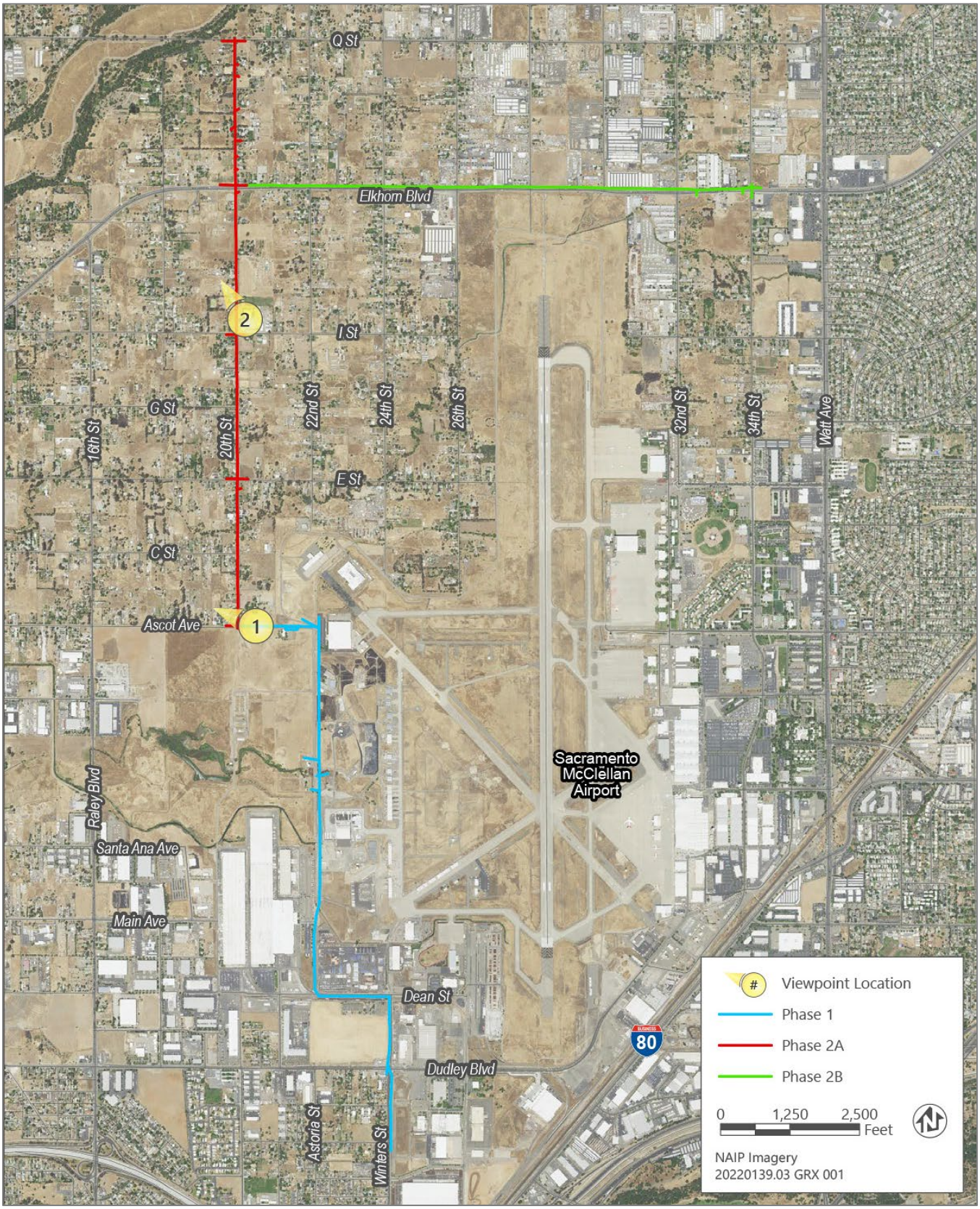
Two viewpoints were selected by SMUD to evaluate the aesthetic impacts of the Project. One viewpoint is from the southwest corner of a single-family home and the second is from a rural portion of 20th Street at the eastern corner of "I" Street. Figure 3.1-1 shows the locations of the viewing angles for the simulated views of the completed Project that are depicted in Figures 3.1-2 and 3.1-3. Figure 3.1-2 shows a visual simulation of the Project looking northwest from Ascot Avenue. Figure 3.1-3 shows a visual simulation of the Project looking northwest from 20th Street.

As depicted in Figure 3.1-2, from the vantage point of Viewpoint 1, the Project would involve replacement of the existing approximately 40-foot-tall wooden pole with a 90-foot steel pole (raising up to 70-foot, with the remaining 20 feet below ground) at the southeast corner of Ascot Avenue and 20th Street. Additionally, Figure 3.1-3 depicts the replacement of an older 45-foot

wooden pole with a new 70-foot wooden pole from Viewpoint 2. Compared to the existing conditions, poles would be taller and placed farther apart. The increased height would accommodate the proposed 69 kV transmission line, which would appear as approximately six new horizontal wires placed at a height greater than the existing 12 kV power lines. Project features would be visible from nearby public vantage points for both Viewpoints. However, the areas the Project alignment are zoned for industrial and residential uses, which is consistent with existing land uses. Power lines are common features within these types of land uses and are generally considered an expected element of the associated visual character. Thus, while the replacement poles would be taller, equipped with additional wires, and may consistent of different material (i.e., steel instead of wood), they would not differ substantially from the existing character of development along the Project alignment. Further, the Project would not conflict with existing plans/regulations governing scenic quality provided in the Sacramento County General Plan or City of Sacramento General Plan because land use types would remain the same as under the existing conditions. Therefore, the Project would have a ***less-than-significant*** impact related to scenic quality, and no mitigation is required.

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

Less-than-Significant Impact. Construction activities would occur during daylight hours and would not require nighttime lighting. Construction equipment is unlikely to have reflective surfaces and would not be a substantial source of glare in the area. During Project operation, Project features would be similar to existing features and would not require any lighting during operation or create substantial glare. This would include the proposed metal powerline poles that would be non-reflective and would not include reflective material that would produce substantial glare. Therefore, the Project would result in ***less-than-significant*** impacts on light and glare, and no mitigation is required.



Source: Adapted by Ascent in 2023.

Figure 3.1-1 **Viewpoint Locations**

Source: Benchmark 2024.

Figure 3.1-2 **Viewpoint 1 Simulation**

Source: Benchmark 2024.

Figure 3.1-3 **Viewpoint 2 Simulation**

3.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
II. Agriculture and Forest Resources.				
In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997, as updated) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.				
Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				

3.2.1 Environmental Setting

The Project area is predominantly non-agricultural and includes heavy and light industrial development along with rural residential. There are no areas along the Project alignment that are zoned as Agricultural by the County of Sacramento (Sacramento County 2024). An area designated as Farmland of Local Importance and zoned Agricultural is located northwest of the Project alignment along Dry Creek. However, this area does not currently serve an agricultural function.

The Project alignment is identified as urban and built-up land and other land by the California Department of Conservation's (DOC's) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) (DOC 2024a).

According to the Sacramento County Important Farmland map, published by DOC's Division of Land Resource Protection, the Project alignment is designated as Urban Built-Up Land, which is

defined as land that generally includes residential, industrial, commercial, institutional facilities, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatments, and water control structures. Remaining portions of the Project alignment is designated as Other Land, which is defined as land that may include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than forty acres (DOC 2023). No portions of the Project alignment or adjacent parcels are held under Williamson Act contracts (DOC 2022).

There are no areas either within or adjacent to the Project alignment that have been designated as forest land or timberland.

3.2.2 Discussion

a-e) Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural uses; conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract; conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g)); result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; or involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. The Project alignment does not contain any lands designated as Important Farmland (i.e., Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance) or zoned as forest land or a timberland area. There are no active agricultural operations within or near the Project alignment, and there are no Williamson Act contracts associated with the Project alignment. No existing agricultural or timber-harvest uses are located on or near the Project alignment. Therefore, the Project would have ***no impact*** on agriculture or forest land, and no mitigation is required.

3.3 Air Quality

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
III. Air Quality.				
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied on to make the following determinations.				
Are significance criteria established by the applicable air district available to rely on for significance determinations?		☒ Yes	☐ No	
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.3.1 Environmental Setting

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for six criteria air pollutants, which are known to be harmful to human health and the environment. These pollutants are: carbon monoxide (CO), lead (Pb), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), ozone (O_3), particulate matter (which is categorized into particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter [PM_{10}] and particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter [$PM_{2.5}$]), and sulfur dioxide (SO_2). The State of California has also established the California ambient air quality standards (CAAQS) for these pollutants, as well as sulfates, hydrogen sulfide (H_2S), vinyl chloride, and visibility-reducing particles. The NAAQS and CAAQS were established to protect the public with a margin of safety, from adverse health impacts caused by exposure to air pollution. A brief description of the source and health effects of criteria air pollutants is provided below in Table 3.3-1.

Table 3.3-1 Criteria Air Pollutants

Pollutant	Sources	Effects
Ozone	Ozone is a secondary air pollutant produced in the atmosphere through a complex series of photochemical reactions involving ROG, also sometimes referred to as volatile organic compounds by some regulating agencies) and NO_X. The main sources of ROG and NO_X, often referred to as ozone precursors, are products of combustion processes	Ozone causes eye irritation, airway constriction, and shortness of breath and can aggravate existing respiratory diseases such as asthma, bronchitis, and emphysema.

Pollutant	Sources	Effects
	(including motor vehicle engines) and the evaporation of solvents, paints, and fuels.	
Carbon monoxide	CO is usually formed as the result of the incomplete combustion of fuels. The single largest source of CO is motor vehicle engines; the highest emissions occur during low travel speeds, stop-and-go driving, cold starts, and hard acceleration.	Exposure to high concentrations of CO reduces the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood and can cause headaches, nausea, dizziness, and fatigue; impair central nervous system function; and induce angina (chest pain) in persons with serious heart disease. Very high levels of CO can be fatal.
Respirable particulate matter (PM_{10}), Fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$).	Some sources of particulate matter, such as soot and smoke from wood burning in fireplaces, or fugitive dust from demolition and construction activities, are more local in nature. Other sources such as exhaust from vehicular traffic, or smoke and soot from wildfires, have a more regional effect. Particulate matter can also form in the atmosphere by condensation and/or transformation of SO_2 and ROG. PM_{10} emissions typically occur from construction sites, landfills and agriculture, wildfires and brush/waste burning, industrial sources, wind-blown dust from open lands, while $PM_{2.5}$ emissions occur from the combustion of gasoline, oil, diesel fuel or wood.	For $PM_{2.5}$, short-term exposures (up to 24-hours duration) have been associated with premature mortality, increased hospital admissions for heart or lung causes, acute and chronic bronchitis, asthma attacks, emergency room visits, respiratory symptoms, and restricted activity days. These adverse health effects have been reported primarily in infants, children, and older adults with preexisting heart or lung diseases. Long-term (months to years) exposure to $PM_{2.5}$ has been linked to premature death, particularly in people who have chronic heart or lung diseases, and reduced lung function growth in children. Short-term exposures to PM_{10} have been associated primarily with worsening of respiratory diseases, including asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), leading to hospitalization and emergency department visits. The effects of long-term exposure to PM_{10} are less clear, although several studies suggest a link between long-term PM_{10} exposure and respiratory mortality.
Nitrogen dioxide	NO_2 is a reddish-brown gas that is a by-product of combustion processes. Automobiles and industrial operations are the main sources of NO_2.	Aside from its contribution to ozone formation, NO_2 can increase the risk of acute and chronic respiratory disease and reduce visibility.
Sulfur dioxide	SO_2 is a combustion product of sulfur or sulfur-containing fuels such as coal and diesel.	SO_2 is also a precursor to the formation of particulate matter, atmospheric sulfate, and atmospheric sulfuric acid formation that could precipitate downwind as acid rain.
Lead	Leaded gasoline, lead-based paint, smelters (metal refineries), and the manufacture of lead storage batteries have been the primary sources of lead released into the atmosphere, with lead levels in the air decreasing substantially since leaded gasoline was eliminated in the United States.	Lead has a range of adverse neurotoxic health effects.

Source: EPA 2023a, CARB n.d.

Notes: CO=carbon monoxide; NO_2= nitrogen dioxide; NO_x=nitrogen oxides; ROG-=reactive organic gases; SO_2=sulfur dioxide

The Project alignment is in Sacramento County, which is within the Sacramento Valley Air Basin (SVAB). The SVAB encompasses Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Tehama, Shasta, Yolo, Sacramento, Yuba, and Sutter Counties and parts of Placer, El Dorado, and Solano Counties. The SVAB is bounded on the north and west by the Coast Ranges, on the east by the southern portion of the Cascade Range and the northern portion of the Sierra Nevada, and on the south by the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin. Sacramento County is currently designated as nonattainment for both the NAAQS and CAAQS ozone standards, the NAAQS $PM_{2.5}$ standard, and the CAAQS PM_{10} standard. The region is designated as in attainment or unclassifiable for all other NAAQS and CAAQS (CARB 2022, EPA 2023b).

The Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) is the local agency responsible for air quality planning and development of the air quality plan in the Project area. SMAQMD maintains an updated plan for achieving the 8-hour ozone NAAQS and CAAQS that was updated and approved by the SMAQMD Board and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) in 2018. An updated plan for the 2015 8-hour ozone standard, the 2023 Sacramento Regional Plan for the 2015 8-Hour Ozone Standard, was adopted on October 11, 2023. There are currently no plans available for achieving the NAAQS $PM_{2.5}$ standard or CAAQS PM_{10} standard. The air quality plan establishes the strategies used to achieve compliance with the NAAQS and CAAQS in all areas within SMAQMD's jurisdiction. SMAQMD develops rules and regulations and emission reduction programs to control emissions of criteria air pollutants, ozone precursors (oxides of nitrogen [NO_X] and reactive organic gases [ROGs]), toxic air contaminants (TACs), and odors within its jurisdiction.

SMAQMD adopted the Guide to Air Quality Assessment in Sacramento County (CEQA Guide) in December 2009 and has made multiple revisions since, with the most recent revisions occurring in October 2020 to operational emissions pertaining to best management practices (BMPs) for particulate matter. The CEQA Guide establishes thresholds of significance for criteria air pollutants that SMAQMD recommends using when evaluating air quality impacts in Sacramento County. CEQA-related air quality thresholds of significance are tied to achieving or maintaining attainment designation with the NAAQS and CAAQS, which are scientifically substantiated, numerical concentrations of criteria air pollutants considered to be protective of human health. As such, for the purposes of this Project, the following thresholds of significance are used to determine if Project-generated emissions would produce a significant localized and/or regional air quality impact such that human health would be adversely affected.

Per Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines and SMAQMD recommendations, air quality and its associated health impacts are considered significant if the Project would result in any of the following:

- generate construction-related criteria air pollutant or precursor emissions to exceed the SMAQMD-recommended thresholds of 85 pounds per day (lb/day) for NO_X, 80 lb/day and 14.6 tons/year (tpy) for PM_{10}, and 82 lb/day and 15 tpy for $PM_{2.5}$. In addition, all SMAQMD-recommended Basic Construction Emission Control Practices (BMPs) shall be implemented to minimize emissions of PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$; otherwise, the threshold for both PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ is 0 lb/day;

- generate operational-related long-term operational criteria air pollutant or precursor emissions that exceed the SMAQMD-recommended thresholds of 65 lb/day for ROG and NO_X, 80 lb/day and 14.6 tpy for PM_{10}, and 82 lb/day and 15 tpy for $PM_{2.5}$. In addition, all SMAQMD-recommended Operational BMPs for Particulate Matter Emissions from

Land Use Development Projects shall be implemented to minimize emissions of PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$; otherwise, the threshold for both PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ is 0 lb/day;

- result in short-term construction and long-term operational local mobile-source CO emissions that would violate or contribute substantially to concentrations that exceed the 1-hour CAAQS of 20 ppm or the 8-hour CAAQS of 9 ppm;

- expose any off-site sensitive receptor to a substantial incremental increase in TACs emissions that exceed 10 in 1 million for carcinogenic risk (i.e., the risk of contracting cancer) and/or a noncarcinogenic hazard index of 1.0 or greater; and/or

- result in other emissions, such as those leading to odors, adversely affecting a substantial number of people.

3.3.2 Discussion

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The SVAB is currently designated as nonattainment for ozone and PM_{10}. SMAQMD has air quality attainment plans (AQAPs), which present comprehensive strategies to reduce VOC and NO_X emissions from stationary, area, mobile, and indirect sources to achieve attainment status of the NAAQS and CAAQS. The Sacramento Regional 70 ppb 8-Hour Ozone Attainment and Reasonable Further Progress Plan is an air quality attainment plan (AQAP) that is applicable to development in the city as well as Sacramento County. The emission inventories used to develop these plans are based primarily on projected population and employment growth and associated VMT for the SVAB. This growth is estimated for the region, based in part on the planned growth identified in regional and local land use plans such as general plans or community plans. Therefore, projects that would result in population and/or employment growth beyond that projected in regional or local plans could result in increases in VMT above that forecasted in the attainment plans, further resulting in mobile source emissions that could conflict with or obstruct implementation of the air quality plans. Increases in VMT beyond that projected in the County's General Plan, the City's General Plan, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments' regional VMT modeling, and SMAQMD regional air quality plans, generally would be considered to have a significant adverse incremental effect on the SVAB's ability to attain CAAQS and NAAQS for all criteria air pollutants.

It is anticipated that operational activities associated with the Project would include only occasional maintenance and repair. Therefore, the Project would not result in an increase in employment in the area nor would the Project result in additional population/VMT. This would also mean that operational emissions from the Project would be negligible. The Project does not include any land uses or operational emission sources that would result in substantial increases in operational vehicle trips. Thus, long-term operational emissions of criteria air pollutants and precursors would not violate or substantially contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation or expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations such that adverse health impacts would occur.

As discussed previously, SMAQMD developed criteria pollutant thresholds in consideration of achieving attainment for the NAAQS and CAAQS, which represent concentration limits of criteria air pollutants needed to adequately protect human health. Additionally, AQAPs are

developed based on regional population and VMT projections. The Project involves replacement of an existing 12 kV power line with 69 kV and 12 kV cables which, as discussed above, would not result in increased population or VMT due to maintenance activities. Therefore, operation of the project would not substantially contribute to the exceedance of the NAAQS and CAAQs in the County nor result in greater health impacts compared to existing conditions. In addition, because the Project would not induce population growth or VMT, it would therefore not conflict with the goals of the applicable AQAP. Therefore, the operation of the Project would not conflict with the applicable air quality plan for which criteria pollutant emission thresholds of significance were developed to support.

Construction activities would result in temporary generation and emissions of criteria air pollutants and precursors. Construction-related emissions were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2022.1.1.21 computer program, in accordance with recommendations by SMAQMD (CAPCOA 2022). Modeling was based on Project-specific information, where available; reasonable assumptions based on typical construction activities; and default values in CalEEMod that are based on the Project's location and land use type.

Construction activities would take approximately 12 months and are expected to begin as early as Summer 2024. It is assumed that, while construction activities would not be continuous, they are expected to be completed by Summer 2025. The model prepared for this analysis represents a condensed construction schedule (i.e., assumes that construction would occur continuously) because the frequency and duration of breaks in construction activity are not known. Therefore, the model results represent a conservative estimation (i.e., tendency to overstate) of the emissions that would occur during construction.

Construction-related activities would result in Project-generated emissions of ROG, NO_X, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ from construction activities (e.g., digging holes for pole installation, pouring cement) off-road equipment, material delivery, and worker commute trips. Fugitive dust emissions of PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ are associated primarily with excavation, and vary as a function of soil silt content, soil moisture, wind speed, acreage of disturbance, and vehicle miles traveled on and off the site. Both heavy duty equipment exhaust and on-road mobile exhaust result in emissions of the ozone precursors ROG and NO_X. Paving results in off-gas emissions of ROG. Construction activities associated with the Project would require the use of a Digger Derrick truck, two large bucket trucks, two heavy duty pick-up trucks, a semi-truck to haul posts from the off-site holding area to the location they are to be placed, a cement truck, and hauling trucks to haul soil off-site. For assumptions and modeling inputs, refer to Appendix A.

Table 3.3-2 summarizes the modeled maximum daily emissions for all pollutants and annual emissions for particulate matter from construction activity without the application of BMPs.

Table 3.3-2 Project-Generated Construction Emissions by Year

Construction Year	ROG (lb/day) Emissions	NO_X (lb/day) Emissions	PM_{10} (lb/day) Emissions	PM_{10} (tpy) Emissions	$PM_{2.5}$ (lb/day) Emissions	$PM_{2.5}$ (tpy) Emissions
2024	<1	1.03	21	1.2	2	0.1
2025	<1	1	21	0.6	2	0.1
Maximum	**<1**	**1.03**	**21**	**1.2**	**2**	**0.1**
SMAQMD Thresholds of Significance without BMPs[1]	**None**	**85**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Threshold Exceeded?	**N/A**	**No**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**
SMAQMD Thresholds of Significance with BMPs[2]	**None**	**85**	**80**	**14.6**	**82**	**15**
Threshold Exceeded?	**N/A**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

Notes: ROG = reactive organic gas; NOX = oxides of nitrogen; PM10 = respirable particulate matter; lb/day = pounds per day; SMAQMD = Sacramento Air Quality Management District; tpy = tons per year; BMPs = best management practices

[1] Without implementation of fugitive dust reducing BMPs.

[2] With implementation of fugitive dust reducing BMPs.

Source: Modeling conducted by Ascent Inc. in 2024.

As shown in Table 3.3-2, Project construction would not generate emissions in excess of the SMAQMD thresholds for NO_X. However, the Project, without the application of BMPs, would generate daily and annual emissions of PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ in excess of the SMAQMD thresholds during construction activities (i.e., 0 lb/day). Therefore, the impact of construction activities would be ***potentially significant***.

Mitigation Measure 3.3-1: Implement SMAQMD Basic Construction Emission Control Practices

SMUD shall incorporate the SMAQMD's Basic Construction Emission Control Practices (BMPs). into the construction specifications for the Project. BMPs that shall be incorporated into the construction contract include those listed below.

- *Water all exposed surfaces two times daily. Exposed surfaces include, but are not limited to soil piles, graded areas, unpaved parking areas, staging areas, and access roads.*
- *Cover or maintain at least two feet or free board space on haul trucks transporting soil, sand, or other loose material on the site. Any haul trucks that would be traveling along freeways or major roadways should be covered.*

- *Use wet power vacuum street sweepers to remove any visible track out mud or dirt onto adjacent public roads at least once a day. Use of dry power sweeping is prohibited.*

- *Limit vehicle speeds on unpaved roads to 15 miles per hour (mph).*

- *Complete construction of all roadways, driveways, sidewalks, parking lots as soon as possible. In addition, building pads should be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding or soil binders are used.*

- *Minimize idling time either by shutting equipment off when not in use or reducing the time of idling to 5 minutes [required by California Code of Regulations, Title 13, sections 2449(d)(3) and 2485]. Provide clear signage that posts this requirement for workers at the entrances to the site.*

- *Maintain all construction equipment and ensure it is in proper working condition according to manufacturer's specifications. The equipment must be checked by a certified mechanic and determined to be running in proper condition before it is operated.*

Mitigation Measure 3.3-1 will require implementation of SMAQMD's Basic Construction Emission Control Practices, which allows for adjustment of the SMAQMD Thresholds of Significance to a non-zero thresholds, as presented in Table 3.3-2. Application of the non-zero threshold would bring unmitigated construction-related criteria pollutant emissions associated with the Project below SMAQMD thresholds. Therefore, short-term construction emissions of criteria air pollutants and precursors would not violate or substantially contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation or expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations such that adverse health impacts would occur. As discussed previously, SMAQMD developed these thresholds in consideration of achieving attainment for the NAAQS and CAAQS, which represent concentration limits of criteria air pollutants needed to adequately protect human health. Therefore, implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.3-1 would reduce the impact of emissions generated during construction activities to a ***less-than-significant*** level.

b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Sacramento County is currently in nonattainment for federal and State ozone, State PM_{10}, and federal $PM_{2.5}$. Ozone impacts are the result of cumulative emissions from numerous sources in the region and transport from outside the region. Ozone is formed by chemical reactions involving NO_X, ROG, and sunlight. Particulate matter also has the potential to cause significant local problems during periods of dry conditions accompanied by high winds, and during periods of heavy earth disturbing activities. Particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) may have cumulative local impacts if, for example, several unrelated grading or earth moving activities are underway simultaneously at nearby sites. As noted in Impact "a" above, without the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.3-1, Project-generated construction emissions would exceed SMAQMD thresholds. Therefore, this impact would be potentially significant.

Mitigation Measure 3.3-1: Implement SMAQMD Basic Construction Emission Control Practices *(described above)*

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.3-2 would reduce Project construction emissions and ensure that Project related emissions of NOX, ROG, PM10, and PM2.5 would not exceed SMAQMD thresholds during construction activities. The Project would implement SMAQMD BMPs to reduce fugitive dust emissions to the extent feasible. Construction emissions would be temporary, would not be generated following the completion of Project construction, and would not exceed SMAQMD thresholds of significance. Operation of the Project would be limited to maintenance activities, similar to the existing requirements for the current power line that runs along the alignment. Because operation of the Project would not result in a substantial increase in vehicle trips along the Project alignment, there would not be a substantial increase in long-term emissions due to Project implementation. Therefore, short-term Project-generated construction emissions and long-term operational emissions would not be cumulatively considerable, and impacts would be ***less than significant***.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less-than-Significant Impact. Sensitive receptors are generally considered to include those land uses where exposure to pollutants could result in health-related risks to sensitive individuals, such as children or the elderly. Residential dwellings, schools, hospitals, playgrounds, and similar facilities are of primary concern because of the presence of individuals particularly sensitive to pollutants and the potential for increased and prolonged exposure of individuals to pollutants.

Construction-related activities would result in temporary, intermittent emissions of diesel PM from the exhaust of off-road, heavy-duty diesel equipment. For construction-activity, diesel PM is the primary TAC of concern. The potential cancer risk from inhaling diesel PM outweighs the potential for all other diesel PM—related health impacts (i.e. noncancer chronic risk, short-term acute risk) and health impacts from other TACs (CARB 2003). Diesel PM is highly dispersive and can be estimated to decrease by approximately 70 percent at a distance of 500 feet from the source (Zhu et. al 2002).

The Project is generally located adjacent to industrial and residential land uses. Sensitive receptors are associated with residential land uses, which are located along approximately half of the Project alignment. These receptors include residences along Winters Street, 20th Street, and Elkhorn Boulevard, several churches (True Life Church of God, New Testament Baptist Church, and New Life Church), and two schools (Vineland Preschool and Stillwaters Christian School). At a minimum, construction activities would occur 50 feet away from sensitive receptors. It is estimated that pole spacing would be approximately 150-200 feet apart. Steel poles would take two days to install (compared to the shorter one-day installation of wooden poles). As a conservative estimate (i.e. 150 feet between poles and a two-day pole construction duration), Project construction would only occur within a 500-foot radius of a given sensitive receptor for approximately two weeks.

Based on emissions modeling, maximum daily emissions of exhaust $PM_{2.5}$ would be less than 1 lb/day during construction with implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.3-1. As noted previously, these estimates represent a conservative analysis and would only occur near each sensitive receptor during a short period of time. The Project would not generate emissions during operations.

Considering the highly dispersive properties of diesel PM, the relatively low mass of diesel PM emissions that would be generated at any single place during Project construction, and the relatively short period during which diesel PM—emitting construction activities would take place near any one sensitive receptor, construction-related TACs would not expose sensitive receptors to an incremental increase in cancer risk that exceeds 10 in one million. The Project would not generate any emissions during operations and would not result in long-term exposure of any sensitive receptors to TACs. As a result, this impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

Less-than-Significant Impact. Minor odors from the use of heavy-duty diesel equipment and the pouring of concrete during Project construction activities would be intermittent and temporary, and would dissipate rapidly from the source within an increase in distance. While the Project would be constructed intermittently over a 12-month period, these types of odor-generating activities would not occur at any single location or for an extended period of time. Therefore, Project construction is not anticipated to result in substantial odor emissions. Activities associated with Project operation would be limited to maintenance activities that would occur at a similar extent to under the existing conditions for the current power line. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not result in exposure of a substantial number of people to objectionable odors. Thus, this impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

3.4 Biological Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
IV. Biological Resources.				
Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.4.1 Environmental Setting

This section describes biological resources in and adjacent to the Project alignment and evaluates potential impacts to such resources as a result of Project implementation. To determine the biological resources that may be subject to impacts from the Project, the following data sources were reviewed:

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) records search for special-status species occurrences within the Rio Linda and eight surrounding USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangles (Carmichael, Citrus Heights, Pleasant Grove, Roseville, Sacramento East, Sacramento West, Taylor Monument, and Verona) (CDFW 2024a);

- California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Online Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants records search for special-status species occurrences within the Rio Linda and eight surrounding USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangles (CNPS 2024);
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information, Planning, and Consultation System (IPaC) list of federally proposed, candidate, threatened, and endangered species that may occur in the Project region (USFWS 2024a);
- USFWS Critical Habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species (online mapping program) (USFWS 2024b);
- USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) (USFWS 2024c);
- National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) (USGS 2024); and
- SMUD Elverta/McClellan Habitat Assessment Technical Memorandum (Ascent 2024).

Appendix B provides a list of special-status species derived from the database searches listed above and an evaluation of their potential to occur within the Project alignment. Biologists conducted a reconnaissance-level field survey of the Project alignment on November 28, 2023, and February 13, 2024. A habitat assessment for vernal pool branchiopods was conducted during the February 13, 2024 field survey.

Vegetation and Habitat Types

Vegetation and habitat types within the Project alignment include:

- developed,
- annual grassland,
- wetlands, and
- riverine.

Developed: Developed habitat along the Project alignment consists of roadways, road shoulders, infrastructure associated with the Sacramento McClellan Airport, industrial and commercial development, and residential uses. Developed areas are paved or otherwise developed or disturbed and generally lack natural vegetation. When present, vegetation associated with developed areas consists of turf grass and other ornamental shrubs, plants, and trees.

Annual Grassland: Annual grassland habitat is dominated by nonnative grasses, including soft chess (*Bromus hordeaceus*), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), wild oats (*Avena fatua*), Italian rye grass (*Festuca perennis*), and barley (*Hordeum* sp.). Other plant species observed include yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), hairy vetch (*Vicia villosa*), crane's bill geranium (*Geranium molle*), California burclover (*Medicago polymorpha*), and wild radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*). Due to its proximity to developed areas, annual grassland habitat in the Project alignment is highly and regularly disturbed by mowing and other human activities.

Wetlands: A formal aquatic resources delineation was not conducted for the Project. However, several wetland features were noted within the Project alignment. Wetlands within and adjacent to the Project alignment consist of seasonal wetlands, vernal pools, and swales. Wetland features have the potential to provide habitat for federally and state-listed species including vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*), vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardi*), western spadefoot toad (*Spea hammondii*), and special-status plants.

Riverine: Riverine habitats, including stream channels and rivers, are distinguished by intermittent or continually running water. As noted above, a formal aquatic resources delineation was not conducted for the Project. However, several riverine features were noted within the Project alignment. Magpie Creek, an intermittent stream channel, flows westward under the Project alignment near Patrol Road and Shelter Road. Don Julio Creek, an intermittent channel, flows west under the Project alignment just north of Magpie Creek. In addition to these two channels, a number of unnamed intermittent and ephemeral channels (both natural and man-made) cross the Project alignment.

Special-status Species

Special-status species are species that are legally protected under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), California Endangered Species Act (CESA), California Fish and Game Code, or local plans, policies, and regulations or that are otherwise considered sensitive by federal, state, or local resource conservation agencies. For this IS/MND, special-status species are defined as:

- species listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered under ESA;
- species designated as a candidate for listing as threatened or endangered under ESA.
- species listed, proposed for listing, or a candidate for listing as threatened or endangered under CESA;
- species listed as fully protected under the California Fish and Game Code;
- Animals identified by CDFW as species of special concern;
- plants considered by CDFW to be “rare, threatened or endangered in California” (California Rare Plant Ranks of 1A, presumed extinct in California; 1B, considered rare or endangered in California and elsewhere; and 2, considered rare or endangered in California but more common elsewhere). The California Rare Plant Ranks correspond with and replace former California Native Plant Society listings. While these rankings do not afford the same type of legal protection as ESA or CESA, the uniqueness of these species requires special consideration under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA);
- species considered a locally significant species, that is, a species that is not rare from a statewide perspective but is rare or uncommon in a local context such as within a county or region (CEQA Section 15125 [c]) or is so designated in local or regional plans, policies, or ordinances (State CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G); and

- species that otherwise meet the definition of rare or endangered under CEQA Sections 15380(b) and (d).

A preliminary list of special-status botanical and animal species with potential to occur within or along the Project alignment was developed based on a review of the existing data sources described previously (see Appendix B). An analysis of special-status animal and botanical species was conducted using documentation related to potential to occur in the region, the presence of suitable habitat within the Project alignment, and other factors.

3.4.2 Discussion

a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

Special-Status Plant Species

After completion of the reconnaissance-level field surveys and review of existing information on special-status plant species in the vicinity of the Project alignment, it was determined that six special-status plant species have the potential to occur within the Project alignment, including dwarf downingia (*Downingia pusilla*), Bogg's Lake hedge-hyssop (*Gratiola heterosepala*), Ahart's dwarf rush (*Juncus leiospermus* var. *ahartii*), Red Bluff dwarf rush (*Juncus leiospermus* var. *leiospermus*), legenere (*Legenere limosa*), and Sacramento Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia viscida*). Suitable habitat for these plant species includes vernal pools as well as seasonal wetlands, swales, and other seasonally wet areas such as ditches. While potentially suitable habitats for these species were documented within and adjacent to the Project alignment, no such habitat would be directly affected by the Project. However, work activities adjacent to wetland features could cause -impacts to habitat through construction personnel or equipment unintentionally trampling or otherwise affecting habitat. This impact would be potentially significant, and mitigation is required.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-1: Conduct Biological Resources Environmental Awareness Training

Before any work occurs, including equipment staging, all construction personnel shall participate in a biological resources environmental awareness training regarding special-status species and sensitive habitats present in the Project alignment. If new construction personnel are added to the Project, they must receive the mandatory training before starting work. As part of the training, an environmental awareness handout shall be provided to all personnel that describes and illustrates sensitive resources to be avoided during Project construction.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-2: Install Temporary Fencing to Protect Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas

Temporary fencing shall be placed along the boundary of the work areas to avoid and protect environmentally sensitive areas (waters of the U.S. and State, special-status species habitat) during construction activities. Fencing must be installed prior to the initiation of any vegetation removal, equipment staging, construction, or other Project activity. Fencing will consist of temporary construction barrier fencing or silt fencing and be of sufficient height to prevent construction personnel and equipment from entering any environmentally sensitive areas. The fencing will be checked regularly and maintained until all construction is complete.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-3: Conduct Weekly Biological Monitoring Visits

A qualified biologist shall make periodic monitoring visits to construction areas occurring in or adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas. The construction contract shall specify that the construction contractor shall maintain the fencing protecting sensitive biological resources. Additionally, SMUD shall utilize a qualified biologist on-call to assist the construction crew in complying with all Project implementation restrictions and guidelines on a monthly basis or as needed.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-4: Restore Temporarily Disturbed Areas

All temporarily disturbed areas shall be returned to pre-Project conditions upon completion of construction. Soil stabilization may include, but is not limited to, seeding with a native grass seed mix and/or planting native plants. These areas will be properly protected from washout and erosion using appropriate erosion control devices including coir netting, hydroseeding, and revegetation. The existing grades in temporary impact areas will be recontoured to pre-Project conditions.

With implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.4-1 through 3.4-4 potential impacts to special-status plant species would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level because special-status species and sensitive habitats would be avoided. In addition, the Project would be subject to the NPDES Statewide construction general permit for stormwater runoff (Order WQ 2022-0057–DWQ and NPDES No. CAS000002 [Construction General Permit]), which would comply with state and federal water quality regulations. In compliance with the Construction General Permit, a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) would be developed for the Project by a qualified SWPPP professional. The objectives of the SWPPP are to identify pollutant sources that may affect the quality of stormwater associated with construction activity and identify, construct, and implement stormwater pollution prevention measures to reduce pollutants in stormwater discharges during and after construction. Therefore, the SWPPP would include a description of potential pollutants, the management of dredged sediments, and hazardous materials present on the site during construction (including vehicle and equipment fuels). The SWPPP would also include details of how BMPs for sediment and erosion control would be implemented to prevent sediment runoff.

Vernal Pool Branchiopods (Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp and Vernal Pool Tadpole Shrimp)

There are 17 CNDDB records of vernal pool fairy shrimp and one CNDDB record of vernal pool tadpole shrimp within 5.0 miles of the Project alignment (CDFW 2024a). Each of these species has a recorded occurrence immediately south and east of the Project alignment associated with a vernal pool complex southwest of Ascot Avenue and Patrol Road. This vernal pool complex is within the boundaries of the West Nature Area. Both of these occurrences are presumed extant.

Suitable habitat for vernal pool tadpole shrimp and vernal pool fairy shrimp includes vernal pools as well as seasonal wetlands, swales, and other seasonally wet areas such as ditches. Suitable habitat for vernal pool fairy shrimp and vernal pool tadpole shrimp is located in numerous locations within and adjacent to the Project alignment. There is a vernal pool complex southwest of the intersection of Ascot Avenue and Patrol Road. These features have recorded occurrences of vernal pool branchiopods including vernal pool tadpole shrimp and vernal pool fairy shrimp (CDFW 2024a). In addition to this vernal pool complex, suitable habitat for vernal pool branchiopods was identified within and adjacent to the Project alignment adjacent to Patrol Road, 20th Street, and Elkhorn Boulevard.

Based on preliminary Project design, the Project would not result in direct impacts to vernal pool branchiopod habitat. Vernal pool branchiopod impacts are considered “direct impacts” if the Project would result in the direct placement of fill into any portion of suitable habitat. As currently designed, there would be no placement of new poles or any other associated ground disturbance within suitable habitat for vernal pool large branchiopods, and poles to be removed within suitable habitat would be cut at ground level and left in place. Therefore, there would be no fill of any vernal pool large branchiopod habitat as a direct result of project construction. As such, there would be no direct effects to vernal pool branchiopods or their habitat.

Indirect impacts to vernal pools and similar habitats can occur through altered landscape hydrology, such as new impervious surfaces, water runoff, or introduction of chemicals or pollution from nearby construction activities. In addition, earth moving, drilling, trenching and other activities within the micro-watershed of a vernal pool can adversely affect the hydrologic regime of the vernal pool through changes in surface flows or perched groundwater flows leading to changes in the timing and depth of saturation/inundation. According to the USFWS, where the reach of indirect effects on vernal pools cannot be specifically determined, all habitat within 250 feet of proposed development may be considered indirectly affected (USFWS 1996).

There are several aquatic resources that provide potentially suitable habitat for vernal pool species that occur within 250 feet of a proposed project activity (i.e., pole replacement, new pole, or pole removal). Although these aquatic resources occur within 250 feet of project activities, most aquatic resources are hydrologically isolated from project construction due to existing infrastructure, such as paved roads. Therefore, no indirect impacts to these aquatic resources are anticipated.

Several other seasonal wetlands occur within 250 feet of proposed pole replacements, removals, or new poles and do not have an existing infrastructure barrier to surface flows and are located at approximately the same or lower elevation as the powerline alignment with no slope breaks (rises or depressions greater than 1 foot). Pole removals would consist of cutting the pole at ground level and leaving the base in place. Pole replacements would occur in the same hole. These activities would not result in indirect impacts on the seasonal wetlands.

Nine new pole installations (two wood poles, and seven steel poles) are also proposed within 250 feet of seasonal wetlands and potential vernal pools. Two seasonal wetlands are located west and east of Patrol Road, respectively, a third seasonal wetland is located west of 20th Street and south of Q Street, and several potential vernal pools are located at the intersection of 20th Street and Elkhorn Boulevard, within private property.

The holes for the new poles would be drilled using a 3-foot diameter auger to a depth of 9 feet for wood poles and a 5-foot diameter auger to a depth of 20 feet for steel poles. Concrete would be used to secure the steel pole and would create a maximum 20 square-foot impervious surface per pole. These holes would exceed the hardpan layer. However, the disturbance footprint and creation of an impervious surface would be minimal, and the study area and vicinity have a substantial history of disturbance, including excavations to depths far exceeding the hardpan layer. Therefore, indirect impacts to potential vernal pool habitat from drilling would be negligible.

However, work activities adjacent to wetland features could cause indirect temporary impacts to habitat through sediment runoff into these features. As a result, the Project would result in a potentially significant impact*,* and mitigation would be required.

> ***Mitigation Measure 3.4-1: Conduct Biological Resources Environmental Awareness Training (described above)***
>
> ***Mitigation Measure 3.4-2: Install Temporary Fencing to Protect Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (described above)***
>
> ***Mitigation Measure 3.4-3: Conduct Weekly Monitoring Visits (described above)***
>
> ***Mitigation Measure 3.4-4: Restore Temporarily Disturbed Areas (described above)***
>
> ***Mitigation Measure 3.4-5: Restrict Ground-disturbing Activities to the Dry Season (Between April 15 and October 15)***
>
> *All ground-disturbing activities within 250 feet of suitable habitat for vernal pool branchiopods shall be restricted to the dry season (between approximately April 15 and October 15) to avoid the period when special-status species (vernal pool fairy shrimp, vernal pool tadpole shrimp, and western spadefoot) could be breeding.*

With implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.4-1 through 3.4-5, potential impacts to vernal pool branchiopods would be reduced to a **less-than-significant** level because suitable habitat would be avoided.

Western Spadefoot Toad

There are no CNDDB records of western spadefoot toad within 5.0 miles of the Project alignment (CDFW 2024a). However, suitable breeding habitat for western spadefoot occurs in vernal pools and seasonal wetlands in and adjacent to the Project alignment and the annual grassland habitat provides upland habitat. Western spadefoots were not observed during the November 2023 and February 2024 surveys. However, habitat for western spadefoot (vernal pools, seasonal wetlands, and annual grasslands) is present within and adjacent to the Project

alignment, and annual grassland would be permanently affected by construction activities associated with the Project.

The proposed project would result in permanent impacts to potential hibernacula (i.e., upland) habitat (annual grassland) for western spadefoot. No breeding habitat (seasonal wetland, vernal pools) would be directly affected by the Project. The proposed project has the potential to directly impact western spadefoot by causing physical harm to individuals if they are present in the Project alignment during construction. Western spadefoot individuals could be harmed during construction, which could crush burrowing individuals. Additionally, work activities adjacent to wetland features could cause indirect temporary impacts to habitat through sediment runoff into these features. Thus, implementation of the Project would result in a potentially significant impact***,*** and mitigation would be required.

> ***Mitigation Measure 3.4-1: Conduct Biological Resources Environmental Awareness Training*** *(described above)*
>
> ***Mitigation Measure 3.4-2: Install Temporary Fencing to Protect Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas*** *(described above)*
>
> ***Mitigation Measure 3.4-3: Conduct Weekly Monitoring Visits*** *(described above)*
>
> ***Mitigation Measure 3.4-4: Restore Temporarily Disturbed Areas*** *(described above)*
>
> ***Mitigation Measure 3.4-5: Restrict Ground-disturbing Activities to the Dry Season (Between April 15 and October 15)*** *(described above)*
>
> ***Mitigation Measure 3.4-6: Conduct a Pre-Construction Survey for Western Spadefoot***
>
> *A qualified biologist will conduct a survey no less than 7 days prior to the initiation of any ground disturbing activities within or adjacent to suitable habitat for western spadefoot. This survey will comprise walking transects while conducting visual encounter surveys within areas that will be subject to staging, vegetation clearing, grubbing, grading, cut and fill, or other ground disturbing activities. The survey will include wetlands and adjacent grassland. All potential habitat features, such as crevices and burrows western spadefoot often use, within the area of disturbance will be searched to the maximum extent practicable. If the pre-construction survey shows that there is no evidence of western spadefoot, a letter report shall be submitted to SMUD for their records within 14 days of the survey, and no additional measures are required.*
>
> *If western spadefoot are present within the work limits (including their egg masses or tadpoles), then CDFW will be notified and additional avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented. Any special-status species observed will be allowed to voluntarily move outside of the work area on its own volition.*

With implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.4-1 through 3.4-6, potential impacts to western spadefoot would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level because pre-construction surveys, weekly monitoring, biological resources environmental awareness training, necessary fencing, restoration of disturbed areas, and limits to dry season construction activities would ensure that individuals would not be affected.

Western Pond Turtle

There is a single CNDDB record of western pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*) within 5.0 miles of the Project alignment (CDFW 2024a). This occurrence of western pond turtle is within Magpie Creek immediately west of the Project alignment.

Magpie Creek and Don Julio Creek provide suitable aquatic habitat for western pond turtle within and adjacent to the Project alignment, and grasslands and streambanks adjacent to this aquatic habitat provides suitable basking sites and upland egg-laying habitat for this species. Western pond turtles were not observed during the November 2023 and February 2024 surveys. However, both aquatic and upland habitat for western pond turtles is present within and adjacent to the Project alignment, and annual grassland would be permanently affected by construction activities associated with the Project.

The Project would result in permanent impacts to potential upland habitat (annual grassland) for western pond turtle. No aquatic habitat would be directly impacted by the Project. The Project has the potential to directly impact western pond turtle by causing physical harm to individuals if they are present in the Project alignment during construction. Western pond turtle individuals could be harmed during construction, which could crush burrowing individuals. Additionally, work activities adjacent to Magpie Creek and Don Julio Creek could cause indirect temporary impacts to habitat through sediment runoff into these features. Thus, the Project would result in a potentially significant impact*,* and mitigation is required.

> ***Mitigation Measure 3.4-1: Conduct Biological Resources Environmental Awareness Training*** *(described above)*
>
> ***Mitigation Measure 3.4-2: Install Temporary Fencing to Protect Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas*** *(described above)*
>
> ***Mitigation Measure 3.4-3: Conduct Weekly Monitoring Visits*** *(described above)*
>
> ***Mitigation Measure 3.4-4: Restore Temporarily Disturbed Areas*** *(described above)*
>
> ***Mitigation Measure 3.4-7: Conduct a Pre-Construction Survey for Western Pond Turtle***
>
> *A qualified biologist shall survey the work site no more than 48 hours before the onset of activities for signs of western pond turtles and/or western pond turtle nesting activity (i.e. recently excavated nests, nest plugs) or nest depredation (partially to fully excavated nest chambers, nest plugs, scattered egg shell remains, egg shell fragments). Pre-construction surveys to detect western pond turtles in aquatic habitats should focus on suitable aerial and aquatic basking habitat such as logs, branches, rootwads, and rip-rap, as well as the shoreline and adjacent warm, shallow waters where pond turtles may be present below the water surface beneath algal mats or other surface vegetation.*
>
> *Preconstruction surveys to detect western pond turtle nesting activity should be concentrated within 402 m (1,319 ft) of suitable aquatic habitat and should focus on areas along south- or west-facing slopes with bare hard-packed clay or silt soils or a sparse vegetation of short grasses or forbs. If western pond turtles or their nest sites are found, the biologist shall contact CDFW to determine whether relocation and/or*

exclusion buffers and nest enclosures are appropriate. If CDFW approves of moving the animal, the biologist shall be allowed sufficient time to move the western pond turtle(s) from the work site before work activities begin.

With implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.4-1 through 3.4-4 and Mitigation Measure 3.4-7, potential impacts to western pond turtle would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level because pre-construction surveys, weekly monitoring, biological resources environmental awareness training, necessary fencing, restoration of disturbed areas, and limits to dry season construction activities would ensure that individuals would not be affected.

Special-Status and Common Nesting Birds

There are 17 CNDDB records of nesting Swainson's hawks (*Buteo swainsoni*) within 5.0 miles of the Project alignment (CDFW 2024a). However, none of these occurrences are within 1,000 feet of the Project alignment. While the Project alignment is highly urbanized and disturbed, Swainson's hawks are known to nest in urban settings in some locations. Although the Project alignment is within 5.0 miles of known Swainson's hawk nesting locations, and because of its urban nature, the Project alignment does not contain suitable foraging habitat for Swainson's hawk (e.g., row crops, field crops, pasture). There are 11 CNDDB recorded occurrences of white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*) within 5.0 miles of the Project alignment (CDFW 2024a). The nearest occurrence is associated with Magpie Creek and is located immediately west of the Project alignment. This species is known to nest in riparian areas and within urban settings. Although the Project alignment contains trees that could provide nesting sites for these species, foraging habitat is limited near the Project alignment and therefore nesting potential is considered moderate for Swainson's hawk and white-tailed kite.

The mature trees within and adjacent to the Project alignment have potential to provide suitable nesting habitat for Swainson's hawk, white-tailed kite, and other common raptors and nesting birds. Common raptors that may nest along the Project alignment include Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), and great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*). A cooper's hawk was observed during the reconnaissance survey on November 28, 2023. In addition to common raptors, the Project alignment may also support other common nesting birds. The nests of common raptors and other common birds are protected under Sections 3503 and 3503.5 of the Fish and Game Code.

Project construction would not result in the removal of any trees providing suitable nesting sites for special-status or common birds, but there is the potential for trees to be pruned or trimmed and therefore has the potential to result in direct removal of bird nests. Additionally, construction activities occurring during the nesting season (between approximately February 1 and August 31), such as ground disturbance and presence of construction equipment and crews, could generate noise and visual stimuli that may result in disturbance to active bird nests, if present, potentially resulting in nest abandonment. Nest abandonment may result in death of chicks or loss of eggs if the adult bird does not return to the nest. Nest abandonment would be considered a significant impact. As a result, this impact would be potentially significant, and mitigation is required.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-1: Conduct Biological Resources Environmental Awareness Training *(described above)*

Mitigation Measure 3.4-8: Avoid or Minimize Effects on Nesting Birds

The following measures shall be implemented to avoid or minimize loss of active Swainson's hawk, white-tailed kite, and other nesting birds.

- *If construction (including vegetation removal) would occur during the nesting season (between February 1 and August 31), a qualified biologist shall conduct pre-construction nesting bird surveys to determine if birds are nesting in the work area or within 0.25 mile of the Project alignment for Swainson's hawk and 500 feet for all other nesting birds.*

- *The pre-construction nesting bird surveys will identify on-site bird species and any nest-building behavior. If no Swainson's hawks are found within 0.25 mile of the Project alignment or if no nesting birds are found in or within 500 feet of the Project alignment during the pre-construction clearance surveys, construction activities may proceed as scheduled.*

- *If pre-nesting behavior is observed, but an active nest has not yet been established (e.g., courtship displays, but no eggs in a constructed nest), a nesting bird deterrence and removal program will be implemented. Such deterrence methods include removal of previous year's nesting materials and removal of partially completed nests in progress. Once a nest is situated and identified with eggs or young, it is considered to be "active" and the nest cannot be removed until the young have fledged.*

- *If active Swainson's hawk nests are found within the survey area, the construction contractor shall avoid impacts on such nests by establishing a no-disturbance buffer around the nest. Monitoring of the nest by a qualified biologist during construction activities shall be required if the activity has the potential to adversely affect the nest. Based on guidance for determining a project's potential for affecting Swainson's hawks (Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee 2000), projects in urban areas have a low risk of adversely affecting nests greater than 600 feet from project activities. Therefore, 600 feet is anticipated to be the adequate buffer size for protecting nesting Swainson's hawks from disturbances associated with the Project implementation. However, the qualified biologist shall consult with CDFW to confirm the adequacy of the no-disturbance buffer and/or whether the buffer may be reduced based on the biologist's professional judgment.*

- *For species other than Swainson's hawk, if an active nest is found in or within 500 feet of the Project alignment during construction, a "no construction" buffer zone will be established around the active nest (usually a minimum radius of 50 feet for passerine birds and 500 feet for raptors) to minimize the potential for disturbance of the nesting activity. The qualified biologist will determine and flag the appropriate buffer size required, based on the species, specific situation, tolerances of the species, and the nest location. Project activities will resume in the buffer area when the qualified biologist has determined that the nest(s) is*

(are) no longer active or the biologist has determined that with implementation of an appropriate buffer, work activities would not disturb the birds nesting behavior.

With implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.4-1 and 3.4-8, potential impacts to nesting birds would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level because pre-construction surveys and biological resources environmental awareness training would ensure that nesting birds would not be affected.

b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

No Impact. The Project alignment does not contain riparian habitat. Therefore, there would be ***no impact*** on riparian habitat. Sensitive natural communities include wetlands, which are discussed below.

c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Based on preliminary Project design, there would be no direct impacts to state or federally protected aquatic resources (including wetlands) within the Project alignment. As currently designed, there would be no placement of new poles or any other associated ground disturbance within state or federally protected aquatic resources, and poles to be removed within state or federally protected aquatic resources would be cut at ground level and left in place. As such, there would be no direct effects to state or federally protected aquatic resources. However, work activities adjacent to state or federally protected wetlands could cause indirect temporary impacts to habitat through sediment runoff into these features. Thus, implementation of the Project would result in a potentially significant impact*,* and mitigation would be required.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-1: Conduct Biological Resources Environmental Awareness Training (described above)

Mitigation Measure 3.4-2: Install Temporary Fencing to Protect Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (described above)

Mitigation Measure 3.4-3: Conduct Weekly Monitoring Visits (described above)

Mitigation Measure 3.4-4: Restore Temporarily Disturbed Areas (described above)

With implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.4-1 through 3.4-4, potential impacts to state or federally protected aquatic resources would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level because direct impacts to state and federally protected aquatic resources would be avoided and sediment runoff into these features would be eliminated such that there would not be substantial indirect impacts.

d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

No Impact. The Project alignment is located primarily within an urban and disturbed setting. This urban and disturbed setting does not support native wildlife nursery sites. A search of CDFW's California Essential Habitat Connectivity and Missing Linkages in California Landscape data did not identify any designated essential habitat connectivity areas or missing linkages within the Project alignment or in the immediate Project vicinity (CDFW 2024b). The Project would not alter any existing wildlife corridor and would not interfere with the movement of migratory fish species. Therefore, the Project would result in ***no impact*** on movement of native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, movement corridors, or native wildlife nursery sites, and no mitigation would be required.

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Less-than-Significant Impact. The Project alignment would primarily be located within the County of Sacramento, with the exception of four poles located along Ascot Road (two poles associated with Phase 1 and two poles associated with Phase 2A) that would be located within the City of Sacramento. Therefore, both County of Sacramento and City of Sacramento policies and ordinances apply.

County of Sacramento

Chapter 19.04

Chapter 19.04 of the Sacramento County Code of Ordinances provides for the protection, preservation, and regulation of trees on public property within Sacramento County. This includes all trees planted or maintained by the County on an easement, planting easement, street, County park, or public premises. A permit shall be required to plant, transplant, move, separate, trim, prune, cut above or below ground, disrupt, alter, or take any other action upon any tree located on public premises.

Chapter 19.12

The Sacramento County Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance (Chapter 19.12 of the Sacramento County Code of Ordinances) provides for the protection of native oak trees, including valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), interior live oak (*Q. wislizeni*), blue oak (*Q. douglasii*), and oracle oak (*Q. morehus*). Protected trees include any living native oak tree having at least one trunk of six inches or more diameter at standard height (DSH), or a multi-trunked native oak tree having an aggregate DSH of 10 inches. Chapter 19.12 states that no person shall trench, grade, or fill within the dripline of any native oak tree; or destroy, kill, or remove any native oak tree, on any property, public or private, without a tree permit.

City of Sacramento

Chapter 12.56

The City of Sacramento Tree Planting, Maintenance, and Conservation Ordinance (Chapter 12.56 of the City of Sacramento Code of Ordinances) includes provisions to protect City street trees as well as private protected trees. All removal, trimming, pruning, cutting, or other maintenance activities on any City street tree or private protected trees requires a permit from the Director of the Department of Transportation pursuant to City Code Section 12.56.050.

A City tree is defined as any tree the trunk of which, when measured 4.5 feet above ground, is partially or completely located in a city park, on real property the city owns in fee, or o a public right-of-way, including any street, road, sidewalk, park strip, mow strip, or alley. A private protected tree is defined as a tree that is designated by city council resolution to have special historical value, special environmental value, or significant community benefit, and is located on private property; any native Valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*), interior live oak (*Quercus wislizenii*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*), or California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), that has a DSH of 24 inches or more, and is located on private property; a tree that has a DSH of 24 inches or more located on private property that is an undeveloped lot or does not include any single or duplex dwellings; or a tree that has a DSH of 32 inches or more located on private property that includes any single unit or duplex dwellings.

Implementation of the Project is not expected to result in the removal of any trees, but there is the potential for trees to be pruned or trimmed. This would require a permit from Sacramento County and/or the City of Sacramento. SMUD compliance with the conditions of the County's and/or City's tree permit would constitute compliance with Sacramento County Code Chapter 19.04 and 19.12 and City of Sacramento Code Chapter 12.56. Therefore, the impact from implementation of the Project would result in a ***less than significant*** impact.

f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

No Impact. There are no Habitat Conservation Plans, Natural Community Conservation Plans, or other approved habitat conservations applicable to the Project alignment. Therefore, there would be ***no impact*** related to conflicts with adopted conservation plans.

3.5 Cultural Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
V. Cultural Resources.				
Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.5.1 Environmental Setting

Regional Precontact History

Although human occupation of the Central Valley may extend back 10,000 before present (B.P.), reliable evidence of such an early human presence is lacking and may be deeply buried. The precontact history setting can be categorized into the following periods.

The Paleo-Indian Period: The Paleo-Indian Period (12,000 to 10,500 B.P.) saw the first demonstrated entry and spread of humans into California. Characteristic artifacts recovered from archaeological sites of this time period include fluted projectile points (constructed from chipped stones that have a long groove down the center called a “flute”) and large, roughly fashioned cobble and bifacially-flaked stone tools that were used in hunting the mastodon, bison, and mammoth that roamed the land during this time.

The Lower Archaic Period: The beginning of the Lower Archaic Period (10,500 to 7500 B.P.) coincides with that of the Middle Holocene climatic change which resulted in widespread floodplain deposition. This episode resulted in most of the early archaeological deposits being buried. Most tools were manufactured of local materials, and distinctive artifact types include large dart points and the milling slab and handstone.

The Middle Archaic Period: The Middle Archaic Period (7500 to 2500 B.P.) is characterized by warm, dry conditions which brought about the drying up of pluvial lakes. Economies were more diversified and may have included the introduction of acorn processing technology, although hunting remained an important source of food. Artifacts characteristic of this period include milling stones and pestles and a continued use of a variety of implements interpreted as large dart points.

The Upper Archaic Period: The Upper Archaic Period (2500 to 850 B.P.) corresponds with a sudden turn to a cooler, wetter, and more stable climate. The development of status distinctions based upon wealth is well documented in the archaeological record. The development of specialized tools, such as bone implements and stone plummets, as well as manufactured shell

goods, were prolific during this time. The regional variance of economies was largely because of the seasonality of resources, which were harvested and processed in large quantities.

The Emergent Period: Several technological and social changes distinguish the Emergent Period (850 B.P. to Historic era) from earlier cultural manifestations. The bow and arrow were introduced, ultimately replacing the dart and throwing spear, and territorial boundaries between groups became well established. In the latter portion of this Period (450 to 1800 B.P.), exchange relations became highly regularized and sophisticated. The clam disk bead developed as a monetary unit of exchange and increasing quantities of goods moved greater distances. It was at the end of this Period that contact with Euroamericans became commonplace, eventually leading to intense pressures on Native American populations.

Historic Setting

Exploration into the Sacramento Valley began in the early 1800s via colonization and the establishment of missions. One of the early explorers, a Spaniard name Gabriel Moraga, is responsible for naming the valley region “Sacramento,” which means “the Holy Sacrament.” Latin influence in the region continued in the early 1800s as Mexico gained independence from Spain and began sending explorers to Sacramento in 1822. While the area was technically under Mexican rule by 1824, the area was still inhabited by numerous Native Americans. Sacramento history goes back to 1839 when John Sutter arrived on the shore near the confluence of the American and Sacramento rivers. The history of Sacramento has been shaped by its location near the Sacramento and American rivers. These rivers provided transportation, irrigation, and food supply for early settlers (Ascent 2024: 29).

The Project alignment located just north of the Rancho del Paso Mexican Land Grant, which was given to Elias Grimes in 1844 by the Mexican governor of California, Manuel Micheltorena. The land grant contained 44,374 acres of land located north of the American River. After Grimes’ death in 1848, Rancho del Paso was sold to Samuel Norris who used the land to farm wheat and raise cattle until 1862, at which point he auctioned it off to pay his debts. The buyers of the land were Samuel Norris’ lawyers, Lloyd Tevis and James Ben Ali Haggin, who purchased the land at the auction for $63,500. James Ben Ali Haggin and Lloyd Tevis owned the Rancho del Paso from 1862 to 1910, with the land serving many purposes throughout the years. In 1910, Haggin and Tevis sold the rancho to the Sacramento Valley Colonization Company, a subsidiary of the United States Land Company of Chicago, which decided to subdivide the land and offer parcels and lots for sale. The area in the vicinity of the Project was divided into approximately 25 farm sites, which faced hardship due to lack of a reliable water source. An Army aircraft supply and maintenance facility known as McClellan Field was built within the area of the previous farm sites between 1937 and 1939. The airfield was named to honor Major Hezekiah McClellan, an aviation pioneer who died in 1937. Due to the construction, upgrades, and employment for the base, a rush of development of houses and businesses within the vicinity of the base occurred throughout the 1940s. After the U. S. Air Force was formed in 1947, McClellan Field became McClellan Air Force Base. McClellan Air Force Base closed in 1995 and today the former military facility houses hundreds of businesses (Ascent 2024:30).

Records Searches, Surveys, and Consultation

A records search of the Project alignment and a 1/4-mile radius was conducted by the North Central Information Center (NCIC), at California State University, Sacramento (SAC-23-217) on November 28, 2023. The following information was reviewed as part of the records search:

- site records of previously recorded sites,
- previous cultural studies,
- NRHP and CRHR listings,
- Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD),
- the California Historic Resources Inventory, and
- the Office of Historic Preservation Historic Properties Directory.

The records search revealed four cultural resources within the Project alignment or within a 1/4-mile radius of the Project alignment. One is a historic era archaeological site (P-34-000654), and three are built environment features consisting of two residences and one road (P-34-000658, P-34-000660, and P-34-005408).

On December 1, 2023, a pedestrian survey was conducted for the Project alignment. The survey revealed that the entire Project alignment has been historically developed, and substantial portions of the Project alignment are paved. No new archaeological sites or built environment features were discovered during the pedestrian survey. Three of the four cultural resources were relocated, and one built environment feature had been demolished (P-34-000660). Although the boundaries of P-34-000654, P-34-000658, and P-34-005408 overlap the Project alignment, the Project as currently designed would not alter or affect the physical aspect of these three sites and features. That is, neither poles nor their foundations would be installed within the three cultural resources (Ascent 2024: 31).

3.5.2 Discussion

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Less-than-Significant Impact. The records search revealed three built environment features (P-34-000658, P-34-000660, and P-34-005408) within the Project alignment. As part of the pedestrian survey P-34-000658 and P-34-005408 were identified, but P-34-000660 was no longer present. Although the Project overlaps the boundaries of P-34-000658 and P-34-005408, the Project as currently designed would not affect the physical aspects of these two resources (Ascent 2024: 31). Therefore, impacts to historical resources would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation is required.

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The records search revealed one historic era archaeological site within the Project alignment (P-34-000654). This archaeological site was identified during the pedestrian survey, and it was determined that the Project as currently designed would not affect the physical aspects of this site because no poles or foundations are proposed within its boundary. In addition, no new archaeological sites were recorded as a result of the pedestrian survey (Ascent 2024: 31). Nonetheless, components of the Project that require earth-moving and excavation may result in the discovery of previously unrecorded archaeological deposits. These activities could damage or destroy previously undiscovered unique archaeological resources pursuant to Section 15064.5. Thus, this impact would be potentially significant.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-1: Unanticipated Discovery of Cultural Resources

In the event that a historic-period archaeological resource (such as concentrated deposits of bottles or bricks with makers marks, amethyst glass, ceramic or metal pipes, or other historic refuse) or a prehistoric archaeological resource (such as lithic scatters, midden soils), is uncovered during grading or other construction activities, all ground-disturbing activity within 100 feet of the discovery shall be halted until a qualified archaeologist can assess the significance of the find. SMUD will be notified of the potential find and a qualified archeologist shall be retained to investigate its significance. If the find is suspected to be Native American in origin, Mitigation Measure 3.18-1b shall be implemented. Any previously undiscovered resources found during construction will be recorded on appropriate California Department of Parks and Recreation 523 forms and evaluated for significance under all applicable regulatory criteria. If the archaeologist determines that the find does not meet the CRHR standards of significance for cultural resources, construction may proceed. If the find is determined to be significant by the qualified archaeologist (i.e., because the find is determined to constitute either an historical resource or a unique archaeological resource), the archaeologist shall work with SMUD to follow accepted professional standards such as further testing for evaluation or data recovery, as necessary. The results of the identification, evaluation, and/or data recovery program for any unanticipated discoveries shall be presented in a professional-quality report that details all methods and findings, evaluates the nature and significance of the resources, analyzes and interprets the results.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.5-1 would reduce potential impacts to previously undiscovered resources by requiring that steps be taken in the event that resources are encountered during Project construction. With implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.5-1, this impact would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level.

c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

Less-than-Significant Impact. Based on documented research, no evidence suggests that any precontact or historic era marked or unmarked human interments are present within or in the immediate vicinity of the Project alignment. However, grave sites and Native American remains can occur outside of identified cemeteries or burial sites. Therefore, there is a possibility that unmarked, previously unknown grave sites and Native American remains could be present within the Project alignment and could be uncovered by Project-related construction activities.

California law recognizes the need to protect Native American human burials, skeletal remains, and items associated with Native American burials from vandalism and inadvertent destruction. The procedures for the treatment of Native American human remains are contained in California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and California Public Resources Code Section 5097. These statutes require that, if human remains are discovered, potentially damaging ground-disturbing activities within a 50-foot radius shall be halted immediately, and the appropriate County Coroner shall be notified immediately. If the remains are determined by the coroner to be Native American, NAHC shall be notified within 24 hours and the guidelines of the NAHC shall be adhered to in the treatment and disposition of the remains. Following the coroner's findings, the NAHC-designated Most Likely Descendant, and the landowner shall determine the ultimate treatment and disposition of the remains and take appropriate steps to ensure that additional human interments, if present, are not disturbed. The responsibilities for acting upon notification of a discovery of Native American human remains are identified in PRC Section 5097.94. Compliance with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and California Public Resources Code Section 5097 would provide an opportunity to avoid or minimize the disturbance of human remains, and to appropriately treat any remains that are discovered. Therefore, this impact would be ***less than significant***.

3.6 Energy

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VI. Energy.				
Would the project:				
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.6.1 Environmental Setting

Electricity in the Project area is provided by the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD). In 2021, SMUD provided its customers with 30 percent eligible renewable energy (i.e., biomass combustion, geothermal, small scale hydroelectric, solar, and wind) and 18 percent and 52 percent from large-scale hydroelectric and natural gas, respectively (SMUD 2023a). Pacific Gas & Electric provides natural gas to residents of Sacramento County; however, the Project does not introduce new natural gas demand.

California has a growing number of alternative fuel vehicles through the joint efforts of California Energy Commission (CEC), California Air Resources Board (CARB), local air districts, federal government, transit agencies, utilities, and other public and private entities. As of August 2023, California contained over 16,000 alternative fueling stations (AFDC 2023).

In 2021, the transportation sector comprised the largest end-use sector of energy in the State totaling 37.8 percent, followed by the industrial sector totaling 23.2 percent, the residential sector at 20.0 percent, and the commercial sector at 19.0 percent (EIA 2023). On-road vehicles use about 90 percent of the petroleum consumed in California. CEC reported retail sales of 448 million and 45 million gallons of gasoline and diesel, respectively, in Sacramento County in 2021 (the most recent data available) (CEC 2023). The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) projects that 996 million gallons of gasoline and diesel will be consumed in Sacramento County in 2030 (Caltrans 2008).

SMUD approved its 2030 Zero Carbon Plan in April 2021. The 2030 Zero Carbon Plan consists of a road map to achieve a zero-carbon power supply by 2030, which exceeds statewide goals to meet zero carbon power supplies by 2045 (see “AB 1279 and 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality,” below). The plan includes solar power, large scale thermal storage, microgrids and fuel cells resources, and is designed to allow for adjustments to the overall scheme, as technological research and progress affect carbon emissions without compromising reliability or affordability (SMUD 2021). Currently, SMUD is forecasting to meet the goals of the 2030 Zero Carbon Plan in 2026 (SMUD 2023b).

Federal Regulations

Energy Policy and Conservation Act, and Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards

The Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 established nationwide fuel economy standards to conserve oil. Pursuant to this act, the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), is responsible for revising existing fuel economy standards and establishing new vehicle economy standards.

The Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) program was established to determine vehicle manufacturers' compliance with the government's fuel economy standards. Compliance with the CAFE standards is determined based on each manufacturer's average fuel economy for the portion of their vehicles produced for sale in the country. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) calculates a CAFE value for each manufacturer based on the city and highway fuel economy test results and vehicle sales. Based on information generated under the CAFE program, DOT is authorized to assess penalties for noncompliance.

Energy Policy Act of 1992 and 2005

The Energy Policy Act (EPAct) of 1992 was passed to reduce the country's dependence on foreign petroleum and improve air quality. EPAct includes several parts intended to build an inventory of alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) in large, centrally fueled fleets in metropolitan areas. EPAct requires certain federal, state, and local government and private fleets to purchase a percentage of light-duty AFVs capable of running on alternative fuels each year. In addition, financial incentives are also included in EPAct. Federal tax deductions are allowed for businesses and individuals to cover the incremental cost of AFVs. States are also required by the act to consider a variety of incentive programs to help promote AFVs. The EPAct of 2005 provides renewed and expanded tax credits for electricity generated by qualified energy sources, such as landfill gas; provides bond financing, tax incentives, grants, and loan guarantees for clean renewable energy and rural community electrification; and establishes a federal purchase requirement for renewable energy.

State Regulations

Warren-Alquist Act

The 1975 Warren-Alquist Act established the California Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission, now known as the CEC. The act established state policy to reduce wasteful, uneconomical, and unnecessary uses of energy by employing a range of measures. The California Public Utilities Commission regulates privately owned utilities in the energy, rail, telecommunications, and water fields.

State of California Energy Action Plan

CEC is responsible for preparing the state energy plan, which identifies emerging trends related to energy supply, demand, conservation, public health and safety, and the maintenance of a healthy economy. The current plan is the 2003 California Energy Action Plan (2008 update). The plan calls for the state to assist in the transformation of the transportation system to improve air quality, reduce congestion, and increase the efficient use of fuel supplies with the least environmental and energy costs. To further this policy, the plan identifies a number of

strategies, including assistance to public agencies and fleet operators in implementing incentive programs for zero-emission vehicles and addressing their infrastructure needs; and encouragement of urban design that reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and accommodates pedestrian and bicycle access.

Assembly Bill 2076: Reducing Dependence on Petroleum

Pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 2076 (Chapter 936, Statutes of 2000), CEC and the CARB prepared and adopted a joint agency report in 2003, *Reducing California's Petroleum Dependence.* Included in this report are recommendations to increase the use of alternative fuels to 20 percent of on-road transportation fuel use by 2020 and 30 percent by 2030, significantly increase the efficiency of motor vehicles, and reduce per capita VMT (CEC and CARB 2003). A performance-based goal of AB 2076 was to reduce petroleum demand to 15 percent below 2003 demand by 2030.

Integrated Energy Policy Report

Senate Bill (SB) 1389 (Chapter 568, Statutes of 2002) required CEC to "conduct assessments and forecasts of all aspects of energy industry supply, production, transportation, delivery and distribution, demand, and prices. The Energy Commission shall use these assessments and forecasts to develop energy policies that conserve resources, protect the environment, ensure energy reliability, enhance the state's economy, and protect public health and safety" (PRC Section 25301[a]). This work culminated in the Integrated Energy Policy Report (IEPR).

CEC adopts an IEPR every two years and an update every other year. The 2021 IEPR is the most recent IEPR. The 2021 IEPR provides a summary of priority energy issues currently facing the State, outlining strategies and recommendations to further the State's goal of ensuring reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible energy sources. The report contains an assessment of major energy trends and issues within California's electricity, natural gas, and transportation fuel sectors. The report provides policy recommendations to conserve resources, protect the environment, ensure reliable, secure, and diverse energy supplies, enhance the state's economy, and protect public health and safety. Topics covered in the 2021 IEPR include building decarbonization, coordination between state energy agencies, decarbonizing the State's natural gas system, increasing transportation efficiencies, improving energy reliability and an assessment of the California Energy Demand Forecast (CEC 2022).

Assembly Bill 1007: State Alternative Fuels Plan

AB 1007 (Chapter 371, Statues of 2005) required CEC to prepare a state plan to increase the use of alternative fuels in California. CEC prepared the State Alternative Fuels Plan in partnership with CARB and in consultation with other state, federal, and local agencies. The plan presents strategies and actions California must take to increase the use of alternative nonpetroleum fuels in a manner that minimizes the costs to California and maximizes the economic benefits of in-state production. The plan assessed various alternative fuels and developed fuel portfolios to meet California's goals to reduce petroleum consumption, increase alternative fuel use, reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and increase in-state production of biofuels without causing a significant degradation of public health and environmental quality.

AB 1279 and 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality

On September 16, 2022, the State legislature passed AB 1279 which codified stringent emissions targets for the State of achieving carbon neutrality and an 85 percent reduction in 1990 emissions level by 2045. CARB released the Final 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality (2022 Scoping Plan) on November 16, 2022, as also directed by AB 1279 (CARB 2022). The 2022 Scoping Plan traces the pathway for the State to achieve its carbon neutrality and an 85 percent reduction in 1990 emissions goal by 2045 using a combined top down, bottoms up approach using various scenarios. CARB adopted the 2022 Scoping Plan on December 16, 2022.

3.6.2 Discussion

a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

Less-than-Significant Impact. Energy would be consumed during Project construction to operate and maintain construction equipment, transport construction materials, and for worker commutes. Levels of construction-related energy consumption by the Project were calculated using the California Emissions Estimator Model Version 2022.1.1.21 and from fuel consumption factors in the EMFAC and OFFROAD models (see Appendix A for detailed calculations). An estimated 11,455 gallons of gasoline and 3,104 gallons of diesel would be consumed during Project construction, accounting for both onsite equipment use and offsite vehicle travel. This one-time energy expenditure required to construct the Project would be nonrecoverable. The energy needs for Project construction would be temporary and would not require additional capacity or increase peak or base period demands for electricity or other forms of energy.

Because maintenance activities associated with the Project would be similar to those required for the existing power line, the Project would not substantially increase the level of operational vehicle trips to the alignment. Thus, the Project would not consume additional energy during operation. Therefore, the Project would not result in an inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. This impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

Less-than-Significant Impact. As discussed above, the Project would not result in inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. Furthermore, as discussed above under Section 3.6.1, “Environmental Setting,” SMUD has approved its 2030 Zero Carbon Plan, which is currently on target to meet its goal by 2026 (SMUD 2023). SMUD’s zero carbon goals exceed the statewide goal of decarbonization by 2045. Because the Project has been developed with the goals of the 2030 Zero Carbon Plan in mind and would not affect the current or future portfolio of renewable energy resources (i.e., biomass combustion, geothermal, small scale hydroelectric, solar, and wind), the Project would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. The Project would result in a ***less-than-significant*** impact, and no mitigation would be required.

3.7 Geology and Soils

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
VII. Geology and Soils. Would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to California Geological Survey Special Publication 42.)	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994, as updated), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☒	☐	☐

3.7.1 Environmental Setting

Geology

The Project alignment is situated in the northwestern portion of Sacramento County, California, within the central portion of the Sacramento Valley. The Sacramento Valley represents the northern portion of the Great Valley geomorphic province of California, which is bordered on the east by the foothills of the Sierra Nevada geomorphic province and on the west by the Coast Range geomorphic province. The Great Valley is an asymmetrical trough approximately 400 miles long and 40 miles wide forming the broad valley along the axis of California. Erosion of the Coast Range and the Sierra Nevada has generated alluvial, overbank, and localized lacustrine sediments as thick as 50,000 feet. Subsequent deformation has folded these sediments into an asymmetrical syncline. Along the boundaries of the Sacramento Valley basin, these sediments

decrease in thickness to the east and overlap older, alluvial and channel deposits associated with previous alignments of the American River and at greater depth, metamorphic terrain and crystalline basement rock of the Sierra Nevada (DOC 2002).

The Project alignment is located along Winters Street, Dean Street, Patrol Road, Ascot Avenue, 20th Street, and Elkhorn Boulevard in Sacramento County, California. The topography of the alignment is relatively flat. Geologic mapping shows the near-surface soils within the Project area consist primarily of Holocene and Pleistocene basin deposits (UCMP 2024). These basin deposits are characterized by fine sands, silts, and clays and are consistent. These more recent alluvium deposits are generally underlain by Pleistocene-age Riverbank formation (UCMP 2024).

Groundwater depths in the vicinity of the Project alignment are fairly deep and range between 105 to 125 feet below the ground surface based on monitored wells within the Project vicinity (DWR 2024).

Seismicity

The Great Valley is bounded on the west by the Great Valley fault zone and the Coast Ranges and on the east by the Foothills fault zone and the Sierra Nevada. Relatively few faults in the Great Valley have been active during the last 11,700 years. The closest faults to the Project alignment with evidence of displacement during Holocene time are the Dunnigan Hills Fault (approximately 22 miles to the northwest) and the Deadman Fault (approximately 23 miles to the northeast) (DOC 2024b). In general, active faults are located along the western margin of the Central Valley (e.g., the Great Valley Fault) and within the Coast Ranges (Jennings 1994).

Substantial historic seismicity in the region includes the April 19, 1892 Vacaville earthquake, which had an estimated magnitude of 6.6 along with significant seismicity associated with the San Andreas fault system (e.g. 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and 1868 Hayward Earthquake) and more recent 2014 South Napa Earthquake which had an estimated magnitude of 6.0 (Sacramento County 2010).

According to the California Geological Survey Earthquake Shaking Potential for California, the Sacramento region is projected to experience lower levels of shaking less frequently, due to the regions distance from known, active faults. However, very infrequent earthquakes could still cause strong shaking in the Sacramento region (DOC 2016). The occurrence of liquefaction during an earthquake can potentially cause reduction in or loss of shear strength, seismically induced settlements, formation of boils, or lateral spreading of the liquefied soil. In order for liquefaction of soils due to ground shaking to occur, subsurface soils must be in a relatively loose state, soils must be saturated, soils must be sand like (e.g. non-plastic or of very low plasticity), and the ground motion is of sufficient intensity to act as a triggering mechanism.

Soils

A review of U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil survey data indicates that the Project alignment is composed of the Fiddyment fine sandy loam, Fiddyment-Urban land complex, Madera loam, San Joaquin fine sandy loam, San Joaquin silt loam, San Joaquin-Urban land complex, Urban land-Xerarents-Fiddyment complex, Xerarents-San Joaquin complex, and Xerarents-Urban land-San Joaquin complex (NRCS 2024). The soils that make up the Project alignment include soils that are generally well drained and have a high permeability quality that allows water and air to move freely through it.

3.7.2 Discussion

a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to California Geological Survey Special Publication 42.)

No Impact. Surface ground rupture along faults is generally limited to a linear zone a few yards wide. There are no Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones within Sacramento County (DOC 2024c). Consequently, the Project is not expected to expose people or structures to adverse effects caused by the rupture of a known fault. There would be ***no impact*** associated with fault rupture, and no mitigation would be required.

ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less-than-Significant Impact. The Project alignment is located near the center of the Sacramento Valley, which has historically experienced a low level of seismic ground shaking. The California Geological Survey has identified the region as an area of low to moderately low earthquake shaking potential (DOC 2016).

Depending on the strength of ground shaking, it is possible that structures in the area could be damaged during such an event. However, Project construction would conform to the standards contained within California Building Code (CBC) Title 24, which identifies specific design requirements to reduce damage from strong seismic ground shaking, ground failure, landslides, soil erosion, and expansive soils. This impact would be ***less than significant,*** and no mitigation would be required.

iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less-than-Significant Impact. Soil liquefaction most commonly occurs when ground shaking from an earthquake causes a sediment layer saturated with groundwater to lose strength and take on the characteristics of a fluid, thus becoming similar to quicksand. Liquefaction may also occur in the absence of a seismic event, when unconsolidated soil above a hardpan becomes saturated with water. Factors determining liquefaction potential are the soil type, the level and duration of seismic ground motions, the type and consistency of soils, and the depth to groundwater. Loose sands, peat deposits, and unconsolidated Holocene-age sediments are the most susceptible to liquefaction, while clayey silts, silty clays, and clays deposited in freshwater environments are generally stable under the influence of seismic ground shaking.

Older deposits, including the Pleistocene Riverbank formation which underlies the Project alignment, are not generally susceptible to liquefaction; however, younger loose fluvial deposits overlying the Riverbank formation present a risk of liquefication (UCMP 2024). As discussed above, the water table within the Project alignment is deep, decreasing the potential for liquefaction.

Active seismic sources are a relatively long distance away and the Project alignment is located on flat land with a gradual incline from 53 feet to 86 feet in elevation. Furthermore, the Project

alignment is generally underlain by stable Pleistocene-age Riverbank formation sediments and has low shaking hazard potential. However, in the unlikely event of a very strong earthquake, widespread liquefaction could occur resulting in substantial damage. The Project would comply with CBC Title 24, which includes specific design requirements to reduce damage from ground failure. Therefore, the potential of adverse effects involving ground failure, including liquefaction is low and this impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

iv. Landslides?

No Impact. The Project alignment is located in a flat area; there is no risk of landslides in such terrain. Consequently, the Project would not expose people or structures to landslides and there would be ***no impact*** associated with landslide risk, and no mitigation would be required.

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less-than-Significant Impact. As discussed in Section 3.7.1, NRCS soil survey data indicates that the Project alignment includes soils that are well drained and have a high permeability rate for both wind and water, thereby reducing erosion hazards. Construction activities would involve grading, excavating, moving, filling, and temporary stockpiling of soil within the Project alignment. Construction activities would remove vegetative cover and existing paving and would expose site soils to erosion via wind in the summer months, and to surface water runoff during storm events. Sediment from construction activities could be transported within stormwater runoff and could drain to off-site areas and degrade local water quality.

However, the Project would be subject to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Statewide construction general NPDES permit for stormwater runoff (Order WQ 2022-0057–DWQ and NPDES No. CAS000002 [Construction General Permit]). In compliance with the Construction General Permit, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) would be developed for the Project by a qualified SWPPP professional. The objectives of the SWPPP are to identify pollutant sources that may affect the quality of stormwater associated with construction activity and identify, construct, and implement stormwater pollution prevention measures to reduce pollutants in stormwater discharges during and after construction. Therefore, the SWPPP would include a description of potential pollutants, the management of dredged sediments, and hazardous materials present on the site during construction (including vehicle and equipment fuels). The SWPPP would also include details of how BMPs for sediment and erosion control would be implemented. Implementation of the SWPPP would comply with state and federal water quality regulations.

Furthermore, and as noted above, the Project would be constructed in accordance with CBC standards. These standards require that appropriate soil and geotechnical reports be prepared and that site-specific engineering design measures, including those related to general site grading, clearing and grubbing, soil stabilization, and general erosion control, be implemented to appropriately minimize potential adverse impacts related to erosion within the disturbance areas of the Project alignment. This, coupled with preparation of a site-specific SWPPP, would minimize potential adverse impacts related to erosion and loss of topsoil within the Project alignment. Impacts would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

Less-than-Significant Impact. As described previously, there are no steep slopes within the Project area, and therefore there would be no potential for on- or off-site landslides. Near surface soils encountered in the Project alignment have a substantial portion of sand and silt and are, therefore, not anticipated to be moisture sensitive. Low soil moisture content, deep groundwater levels, and silty and sandy soils are less likely to become unstable and would not result in lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse. Therefore, soils within Project alignment would be suitable for the Project to perform excavation and auguring. Following construction activities each day, the open trenches would be covered with reinforced concrete subsurface structure construction methods Therefore, this impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994, as updated), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

Less-than-Significant Impact. Expansive soils shrink and swell as a result of moisture changes. These volume changes can result in damage over time to building foundations, underground utilities, and other subsurface facilities and infrastructure if they are not designed and constructed appropriately to resist the damage associated with changing soil conditions. A review of NRCS (2024) soil survey data indicates that the type of soils located within the Project alignment are generally composed of soil types with a low shrink-swell potential. Additionally, power line poles would be set ranging from 9 to 20 below ground and the holes would be backfilled with a cementitious slurry mixture or compacted aggregate base to the roadway subgrade elevation to reduce the risk of expansive soils. Therefore, this impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

No Impact. The Project would not require the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. Thus, the Project would have ***no impact*** related to soil suitability for use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems, and no mitigation would be required.

f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Project-related earthmoving activities would occur primarily in the Pleistocene-age Riverbank Formation. Because numerous vertebrate fossils have been recovered from the Riverbank Formation in northern and central California, including localities that are close to the Project alignment, this formation is considered to be paleontologically sensitive. Therefore, earthmoving activities in the Riverbank Formation could result in accidental damage to or destruction of previously unknown unique paleontological resources. This impact would be potentially significant.

Mitigation Measure 3.7-1: Paleontological Monitoring for Deep Excavations

Before the start of any excavation activities, SMUD shall retain a qualified scientist (e.g., geologist, biologist, paleontologist) to train all construction personnel involved with earth-moving activities, including the site superintendent, regarding the possibility of encountering fossils, the appearance and types of fossils likely to be seen during construction, and proper notification procedures to take if fossils are encountered. Training on paleontological resources shall also be provided to all other construction workers but may use a video recording of the initial training and/or written materials rather than in-person training.

If any paleontological resources (fossils) are discovered during grading or construction activities along the Project alignment, work shall be halted immediately within 50 feet of the discovery, and the County Planning Division shall be immediately notified. SMUD shall retain a qualified paleontologist to evaluate the resource and prepare a recovery plan in accordance with Society of Vertebrate Paleontology guidelines. The recovery plan may include but is not limited to a field survey, construction monitoring, sampling and data recovery procedures, museum storage coordination for any specimen recovered, and a report of findings. Recommendations in the recovery plan that are determined by the County to be necessary and feasible shall be implemented by SMUD before construction activities resume in the area where the paleontological resources were discovered.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.7-1 would ensure that excavations are completed in a manner that preserves potential paleontological resources. With implementation of this mitigation measure, the potential for implementation of on-site improvements to directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level.

3.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
VIII. Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.8.1 Environmental Setting

Certain gases in the earth's atmosphere, classified as greenhouse gases (GHGs), play a critical role in determining the earth's surface temperature. Solar radiation enters the earth's atmosphere from space. Most solar radiation passes through GHGs; however, infrared radiation is absorbed by these gases. As a result, radiation that otherwise would have escaped back into space is instead "trapped," resulting in a warming of the atmosphere. This phenomenon, known as the greenhouse effect, is responsible for maintaining a habitable climate on earth.

Prominent GHGs contributing to the greenhouse effect are carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons perfluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride. GHG emissions contributing to global climate change are attributable, in large part, to human activities associated with on-road and off-road transportation, industrial/manufacturing, electricity generation by utilities and consumption by end users, residential and commercial onsite fuel usage, and agriculture and forestry. It is "extremely likely" that more than half of the observed increase in global average surface temperature from 1951 to 2010 was caused by the anthropogenic increase in GHG concentrations and other anthropogenic forcing together (IPCC 2014: 5).

Climate change is a global problem. GHGs are global pollutants because even local GHG emissions contribute to global impacts. GHGs have long atmospheric lifetimes (one to several thousand years) and persist in the atmosphere long enough to be dispersed around the globe. Although the lifetime of any particular GHG molecule is dependent on multiple variables and cannot be determined with any certainty, it is understood that more CO_2 is emitted into the atmosphere than is sequestered by ocean uptake, vegetation, and other forms of sequestration (IPCC 2013: 467).

Federal Plans, Policies, Laws, and Regulations

In October 2012, the EPA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), on behalf of the US Department of Transportation DOT, issued final rules to further reduce GHG emissions and improve CAFE standards for light-duty vehicles for model year (MYs) 2017 and beyond (77 Federal Register [FR] 62624). The most recent CAFE standards are for MYs 2024-2026. The amended CAFE standards increase in stringency for both passenger cars and light trucks, by 8 percent per year for MYs 2024–2025, and by 10 percent per year for MY 2026. The NHTSA currently projects that the standards will require, on an average industry fleet-wide basis, roughly 49 miles per gallon (mpg) in MY 2026 (49 CFR 531 et seq.).

State Plans, Policies, Laws, and Regulations

Statewide GHG Emission Targets and the Climate Change Scoping Plan

On September 16, 2022, the State legislature passed AB 1279 which codified stringent emissions targets for the State of achieving carbon neutrality and an 85 percent reduction in 1990 emissions level by 2045 (this superseded the previous GHG emissions reduction target set forth by EO S-3-05). CARB released the 2022 Scoping Plan on November 16, 2022 as also directed by AB 1279 (CARB 2022b). The 2022 Scoping Plan traces the pathway for the State to achieve its carbon neutrality and an 85 percent reduction in 1990 emissions goal by 2045 using a combined top-down and bottom-up approach using various scenarios. CARB adopted the 2022 Scoping Plan on December 16, 2022.

SB X1-2 of 2011 requires all California utilities to generate 33 percent of their electricity from renewables by 2020. SB 100 of 2018 sets a three-stage compliance period requiring all California utilities, including independently owned utilities, energy service providers, and community choice aggregators, to generate 52 percent of their electricity from renewables by December 31, 2027; 60 percent by December 31, 2030; and 100 percent carbon-free electricity by December 31, 2045. On September 16, 2022, SB 1020 was signed into law. This bill supersedes the goals of SB 100 by requiring that eligible renewable energy resources and zero-carbon resources supply 90 percent of all retail sales of electricity to California end-use customers by December 31, 2035, 95 percent of all retail sales of electricity to California end-use customers by December 31, 2040, 100 percent of all retail sales of electricity to California end-use customers by December 31, 2045, and 100 percent of electricity procured to serve all state agencies by December 31, 2035.

Local

SMAQMD is the primary agency responsible for addressing air quality concerns in all of Sacramento County. SMAQMD recommends methods for analyzing project-generated GHG emissions in CEQA analyses and offers multiple potential GHG reduction measures for land use development projects. SMAQMD developed thresholds of significance to provide a uniform scale to measure the significance of GHG emissions from land use and stationary source projects in compliance with CEQA to align with the statewide GHG emissions target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 with the passage of SB 32 for land use development projects (SMAQMD 2021).

SMAQMD's newly published guidance to address GHGs was released in February 2021. SMAQMD recommends that a 1,100-$MTCO_2e$ be applied as a bright-line threshold of significance for evaluating construction emissions of GHGs.

In their guidance regarding operational GHG emissions, SMAQMD includes an operational GHG screening levels table which shows the size of development (by land use type) at which 1,100 metric tons (MT) of GHG per year would not be exceeded. If a project is less than or equal to 1,100 MT of GHG per year and implements the District's tier 1 operational GHG Best Management Practices, the District's operational GHG threshold of significance would not be exceeded. If project emissions exceed the District's GHG operational screening levels table, the Project would then apply the District's tier 1 and tier 2 Best Management Practices to reduce GHG emissions from the Project. These thresholds and BMPs only apply to land use development projects (e.g., housing, industrial, and agricultural land uses) and because the

proposed project would not be a land use development project, SMAQMD operational GHG thresholds are not used in this analysis.

Sacramento County Climate Action Planning

On November 9, 2011, the County of Sacramento adopted the Climate Action Plan – Strategy and Framework document, which presented a framework for reducing GHG emissions and developing the second phase of the Climate Action Plan (CAP). The County is currently working to develop the Sacramento County Climate Action Plan 2022 (2022 CAP) to address communitywide emissions. The County is in the process of reviewing the 2022 CAP but it has not yet been adopted and is therefore not applicable to this project. Additionally, because crucial laws and regulations, such as AB 1279 and EO B-48-18, have been passed and implemented since the development of the 2011 CAP (the next most-recent iteration of the County's CAP), the GHG reduction goals and strategies within the 2011 CAP have become obsolete. For this reason, the 2011 CAP is not used in this analysis.

City of Sacramento Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

The City of Sacramento's first CAP was adopted in 2012 and served as a stand-alone document that was intended to guide City efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. In 2015 the CAP was incorporated into the 2035 General Plan. The City of Sacramento is currently preparing the Sacramento Climate Action & Adaptation Plan (CAAP), in tandem with the 2040 General Plan Update process. The CAAP is currently in the public review process and has not yet been adopted. Additionally, because important laws and regulations, such as AB 1279 and EO B-48-18, have been passed and implemented since the adoption of the CAP into the 2035 General Plan, the GHG reduction goals and strategies within the CAP are not reflective of the most recent State GHG reduction goals. For this reason, the CAP is not used in this analysis.

2030 Zero Carbon Plan

SMUD approved its 2030 Zero Carbon Plan in April 2021. The 2030 Zero Carbon Plan consists of a road map to achieve a zero-carbon power supply by 2030, which exceeds statewide goals to meet zero carbon power supplies by 2045 (see "AB 1279 and 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality," below). The plan includes solar power, large scale thermal storage, microgrids and fuel cells resources, and is designed to allow for adjustments to the overall scheme, as technological research and progress affect carbon emissions without compromising reliability or affordability (SMUD 2021). Currently, SMUD is forecasting to meet the goals of the 2030 Zero Carbon Plan in 2026 (SMUD 2023).

3.8.2 Discussion

b) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Less-than-Significant Impact. The issue of global climate change is inherently a cumulative issue, because the GHG emissions of an individual project cannot be shown to have any material effect on global climate. Thus, the level of GHG emissions associated with implementation of the Project is addressed as a cumulative impact.

GHG emissions associated with implementation of the Project would be generated during Project construction. The Project would not increase generation of GHG emissions during operations as operational activities would be substantially similar to processes involving the existing 12 kV power line.

As stated in Section 3.3 “Air Quality,” the model prepared for this analysis represents a condensed construction schedule (i.e., assumes that construction would occur continuously) because the frequency and duration of breaks in construction activity are not known. Therefore, the model results represent a conservative estimation of the emissions that would occur during construction. Project-related construction activities would result in the generation of GHG emissions from the use of heavy-duty off-road construction equipment and vehicle use during worker commute. Construction activities associated with the Project would require the use of a Digger Derrick truck, two large bucket trucks, two heavy duty pick-up trucks a semi-truck to haul posts from the off-site holding area to the location they are to be placed, a cement truck, and hauling trucks to haul soil off-site. Construction-related emissions of GHGs were estimated using CalEEMod Version 2022.1.1.21. A detailed discussion of the major construction activities and model assumptions is provided in Section 3.3, “Air Quality.” Model outputs are included in Appendix A.

Total construction activity would result in emissions of 57 MT of carbon dioxide equivalent ($MTCO_2e$). SMAQMD has established quantitative significance thresholds for evaluating GHG emissions. For construction of all types, the established significance threshold is 1,100 $MTCO_2e$ annually (SMAQMD 2021). Because Project construction is projected to emit 57 $MTCO_2e$, which is below the threshold of 1,100 $MTCO_2e$, construction-related GHG emissions would not exceed SMAQMD’s threshold of significance.

Operation of the Project would include occasional vehicle trips for maintenance that would be of similar type and extent as under the existing conditions, thus operation of the Project would not substantially increase emissions of GHGs. Furthermore, as stated above, SMAQMD operational GHG thresholds only apply to land use development projects. Because the Project would not be a land use development project, SMAQMD operational GHG thresholds are not applied to this project.

Because GHG emissions associated with construction of the Project would not exceed SMAQMD thresholds and operational GHGs associated with occasional maintenance trips would be minimal, this impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Less-than-Significant Impact. SMAQMD’s GHG thresholds were developed in consideration of nearer-term statewide GHG reduction goals (i.e., a 40 percent reduction from the 1990 statewide inventory by 2030). This goal is intended to maintain progress towards the GHG reduction goal of the 2022 Scoping Plan which is to achieve an 85 percent reduction in 1990 emissions goal by 2045. Because the Project would be constructed prior to 2030 and does not introduce substantial operational emissions (i.e., minimal new vehicle trips associated with maintenance activities) the Project emissions would further the state’s long-term GHG reductions goals. Based on the analysis above, GHG emissions associated with the Project would be consistent with state GHG reduction goals because they would not exceed the

SMAQMD-recommended threshold of 1,100 $MTCO_2e$. Furthermore, as discussed above under Section 3.8.1, “Environmental Setting,” SMUD has approved its 2030 Zero Carbon Plan, which is currently on target to meet its goal of zero carbon emissions by 2026 (SMUD 2023). SMUD’s zero carbon goals exceed the statewide goal of decarbonization by 2045. Because the Project has been developed with the goals of the 2030 Zero Carbon Plan in mind and would not affect the current or future portfolio of renewable energy resources (i.e., biomass combustion, geothermal, small scale hydroelectric, solar, and wind), the Project would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Therefore, this impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

3.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

	ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
IX.	**Hazards and Hazardous Materials. Would the project:**				
a)	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b)	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c)	Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d)	Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☒	☐	☐
e)	For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f)	Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g)	Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.9.1 Environmental Setting

The State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) GeoTracker website provides data relating to leaking underground storage tanks (USTs) and other types of soil and groundwater contamination, along with associated cleanup activities. GeoTracker did not identify any hazards related to USTs and other types of contamination directly along the Project alignment. Several sites along Patrol Road were identified as active cleanup sites; however, all sites are currently eligible for closure and no further remediation is warranted (SWRCB 2024).

The California Department of Toxic Substances Control's Envirostor website, which provides data related to hazardous materials spills and clean ups, also did not identify any existing hazards related to any cleanup sites within the Project alignment for Phase 2A and Phase 2B (DTSC 2024).

A majority of the alignment for Phase I runs adjacent to, or within the boundaries of the McClellan Business Park, which was historically a part of the McClellan Air Force Base (AFB).

McClellan AFB was an active military facility from 1939 to 2001. McClellan AFB was identified for closure in 2001 under the Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) and soil and groundwater remediation activities have been conducted under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). The area comprising McClellan Business Park has been transferred to Sacramento County and its redevelopment partner McClellan Business Park, LLC pursuant to CERCLA Section 120 (h) (3) (A), (B), and (C). Parcels transferred by deed from the Air Force to the County of Sacramento and then to McClellan Business Park are referred to as "Transfer Parcels". Pursuant to a Memorandum of Agreement between McClellan Business Park, California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Toxic Substances Control, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region, as well as deed restrictions identified as components of remedial activities completed on certain portions of McClellan Business Park, a "Soils Management Manual for Transfer Parcels" (Tetra Tech 2014) has been prepared for all Transfer Parcels that comprise McClellan Business Park. The McClellan Park Soils Management Manual for Transfer Parcels program identifies proper soil handling procedures and details an encroachment permit process which must be followed before any excavation, digging or other disruption occurs within the boundaries of the McClellan Business Park transfer parcels.

There is one public school adjacent to the Project alignment, Vineland Elementary School, located at the northeast corner of the intersection of "I" Street and 20th Street. Two public schools are located within one-quarter mile of the Project alignment, Bell Avenue Elementary School at 1900 Bell Avenue and Vista Nueva Career and Technology High School at 2035 "N" Street.

Sacramento McClellan Airport (former site of McClellan Air Force Base) is a privately owned public-use airport located adjacent to the easternmost edge of the Project alignment. The Project alignment is located within the airport's Area of Influence. The area of the Project alignment is located within the Overflight Zone as well as the Approach/Departure Zone in the northern and southern terminus (SACOG 1987:50).

3.9.2 Discussion

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Less-than-Significant Impact. Construction activities would involve the use of hazardous materials, such as fuels, solvents, gasoline, asphalt, and oil. The use and storage of these materials could potentially expose and adversely affect workers, the public, or the environment due to improper handling or use, accident, environmentally unsound disposal methods, fire, explosion, or other emergencies, resulting in adverse health or environmental effects. Project operation would involve the use of electrical transmission lines, similar to the existing conditions, and would not involve the use of hazardous materials.

The California Highway Patrol and Caltrans are responsible for enforcing regulations related to the transportation of hazardous materials on local roadways, and the use of these materials is regulated by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), as outlined in CCR Title 22. SMUD and its construction contractors would be required to comply with the California Environmental Protection Agency's (Cal EPA's) Unified Program, which protects Californians from hazardous waste and hazardous materials by ensuring consistency throughout the state regarding the implementation of administrative requirements, permits, inspections, and

enforcement at the local regulatory level. Regulated activities would be managed by the Sacramento County Environmental Management Department, which is the designated Certified Unified Program Agency, and in accordance with the regulations included in the Unified Program (e.g., hazardous materials release response plans and inventories, California Uniform Fire Code hazardous material management plans and inventories). Such compliance would reduce the potential for accidental release of hazardous materials during Project construction.

The Project would be required to comply with existing laws and regulations regarding the transportation, use, and disposal of hazardous materials. These regulations are specifically designed to protect the public health and the environment and must be adhered to during Project construction and operation. Compliance with applicable regulations would ensure that this impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Less-than-Significant Impact. As discussed above, there are no existing hazardous conditions within the Project alignment and no hazardous materials would be used during Project operation. Project construction, however, would involve the use of hazardous materials, which could be accidentally upset or released into the environment. Potential hazardous materials that could be used include asphalt and other construction materials. As discussed in item a) above, compliance with applicable laws and regulations regarding the transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials would ensure that the Project would result in a ***less-than-significant*** impact related to upset or accidental release of hazardous materials, and no mitigation would be required.

c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

Less-than-Significant Impact. As discussed above, there is one public school adjacent to the Project alignment and two public schools within one-quarter mile of the Project alignment. Small quantities of hazardous materials such as fuels, oils, and lubricants would be used during Project construction. The Project would be required to comply with existing regulations associated with the transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials. Compliance with applicable regulations regarding hazardous materials would reduce the potential for hazardous emissions within one-quarter mile of existing schools. Therefore, this impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code §65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Government Code Section 65962.5 requires that DTSC compile and maintain a list of hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action, land designated as hazardous waste property, or hazardous waste disposals on public land. This list is known as the Cortese List, which can be accessed on Cal EPA's website. As discussed above, a majority of Phase I of the Project is located adjacent to or within the boundaries of the former McClellan AFB, which has undergone remediation activities and portions of which are subject to deed restrictions, including soil management procedures. Hazardous waste, hazardous substances, and/or petroleum hydrocarbons are known to have

been disposed of in various locations throughout the former McClellan AFB by the Air Force. Contaminated soils disturbed during construction activities may expose construction workers and the general public to known hazardous materials associated with previous land uses on McClellan AFB. This impact would be potentially significant.

Mitigation Measure 3.9-1: Obtain an Encroachment Permit from McClellan Business Park

Prior to Project construction within or adjacent to the McClellan Business Park (Phase 1), SMUD shall, as necessary, obtain an encroachment permit from McClellan Park. The procedures for obtaining the encroachment permit will be consistent with the requirements set forth in the Soils Management Manual for Transfer Parcels (Tetra Tech 2014).

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.9-1 would reduce impacts associated with exposure of construction workers and the public to a Cortese-Listed hazardous materials site to a ***less-than-significant*** level because procedures outlined in the McClellan Park Soils Management Manual for Transfer Parcels would be followed and an encroachment permit from McClellan Park would be obtain, if necessary. These procedures require construction activities to be consistent with proper soil handling procedures for excavation, digging or other disruptions that occur within the boundaries of the McClellan Business Park transfer parcels, which would minimize the risk of exposure of construction workers and the public to known hazardous materials found within contaminated soils.

e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?

Less-than-Significant Impact. Sacramento McClellan Airport is located adjacent to the northern and eastern border of the Project alignment. A small portion of the Project alignment along Elkhorn Boulevard is within the Approach/Departure Zone of the airport's safety zones (SACOG 1987:50). The airport's comprehensive land use plan identifies prohibited uses within the various safety zones (SACOG 1987:46-49). While installing power lines are not specifically listed in the table of compatibility guidelines, the list of allowed and prohibited uses and features generally center around limiting large gatherings of people, structures that might interfere with aircraft navigation, and prohibiting flammable or explosive features to be located above-ground (SACOG 1987:46-49). Additionally, the Project would comply with Federal Aviation Regulations (FAA) Part 77, which prohibits construction that is more than 200 feet above ground level within the airport's area of influence (Caltrans 2011). While the Project alignment includes land within the Approach/Departure Zone of Sacramento McClellan Airport, the Project would not conflict with the safety requirements of the airport's comprehensive land use plan. Therefore, this impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less-than-Significant Impact. Project construction would require temporary lane closures and other roadway effects on Winters Street, Dean Street, Patrol Road, Ascot Avenue, 20th Street, and Elkhorn Boulevard that could interfere with or slow down emergency vehicles, temporarily increasing response times and impeding existing services on these roadways. However, any

Project activities that may involve public ROW would be required to obtain an encroachment permit from either Caltrans, the City, and/or the County of Sacramento. As part of this encroachment permit application, SMUD would be required to prepare and then later implement a traffic control plan, which would require the provision of temporary traffic controls and maintenance of emergency access during construction. Once Project construction is complete, all roads would be returned to their pre-construction state and Project operations would not interfere with emergency repose or evacuation plans. As a result, this impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?

No Impact. The Project is located in a developed area of Sacramento County that is not adjacent to wildlands, therefore implementation of the Project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas. There would be ***no impact*** related to wildland fires, and no mitigation would be required.

3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

	ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
X.	**Hydrology and Water Quality. Would the project:**				
a)	Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b)	Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c)	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:	☐	☐	☒	☐
	i) Result in substantial on- or offsite erosion or siltation;	☐	☐	☒	☐
	ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;	☐	☐	☒	☐
	iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	☐	☐	☒	☐
	iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d)	In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e)	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.10.1 Environmental Setting

Surface Water

Sacramento County lies mostly in the trough of the Sacramento Valley in the northern portion of the Central Valley of California. The county is bound on the east by the Sierra Nevada foothills and extends to the southwest into the Sacramento Delta. Dry Creek, a tributary watershed to the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal and ultimately American River, lies approximately 300 feet northwest from the Project alignment at the intersection of “Q” Street and 20th Street.

Groundwater

The Project alignment overlies the North American Subbasin, which encompasses approximately 342,000 acres in Sutter, Placer, and Sacramento Counties and is bounded by the American, Bear, Feather, and Sacramento rivers. The North American Subbasin includes five Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) that have worked cooperatively to develop this

single Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) covering the 535 square-mile subbasin that includes portions of Placer, Sacramento, and Sutter counties. The GSAs include: Reclamation District 1001 (RD 1001) GSA; Sacramento Groundwater Authority (SGA) GSA; South Sutter Water District (SSWD) GSA; Sutter County GSA; and West Placer GSA. The GSP includes the subbasin setting, a hydrogeological conceptual model, a comprehensive water budget, a basin-wide monitoring network, sustainable management criteria, and projects and management actions necessary to ensure the Subbasin's sustainability (Sacramento Groundwater Authority GSA, Reclamation District 1001 GSA, South Sutter Water District GSA, Sutter County GSA, West Placer GSA 2021).

Flooding

The Project alignment extends generally from a connection point approximately 140 feet south of the intersection of Winters Street and Rene Avenue, to the intersection of Q Street and 20th Street to the north, and the intersection of Elkhorn Boulevard and 34th Street to the east (see Figure 2-1). As depicted in Figure 3.10-1, portions of the Project alignment overlap with areas located within the 100-year Flood Zone and 500-year Flood Zone, which are defined as areas that have a 1 percent or 0.02 percent change of flooding each year, respectively (FEMA 2024).

3.10.2 Discussion

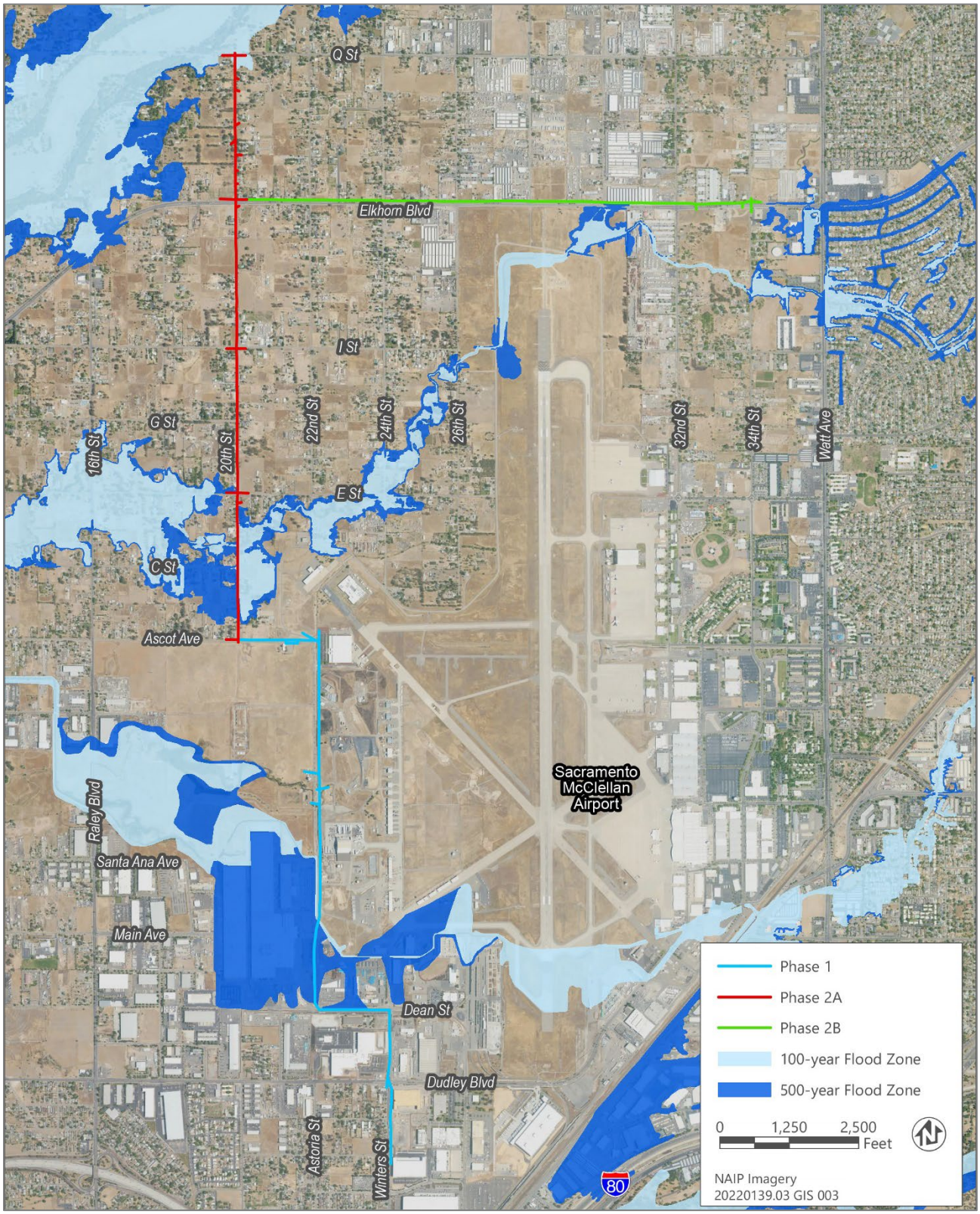
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality

Less-than-Significant Impact. The Project would involve replacement and relocation of power line poles. Along the proposed alignment, pole spacing would be approximately 150-200 feet apart, or greater where space and terrain allows. Staging of poles would generally occur within existing paved and disturbed areas, as well as on truck beds within a single roadway lane. Once augers holes (3-foot diameter for wooden poles and 5-foot diameter for steel poles) have been established, a boom truck would be used to install individual poles, guided by one or more construction crews of approximately 5 people. With the pole in place, concrete would be used to secure the steel poles in place and rocks would be used to secure wooden poles.

Project construction activities would involve the excavation and movement of soil, which could temporarily increase erosion and siltation potential along the project alignment. If not properly controlled, these activities could accidentally discharge wastes into waterways through runoff. However, SMUD would comply with existing stormwater regulations, including the County's Stormwater Ordinance (Sacramento County Code Chapter 15.12), the City's Stormwater Management and Control Code, and the NPDES Regional MS4 Permit, which would necessitate the implementation and maintenance of on-site BMPs to control potential erosion and siltation and prevent discharges off-site. As noted above, the project alignment is partially located within both the City and the County of Sacramento and would comply with the respective code and ordinance depending on the pole location.

As the project would involve the disturbance of less than one acre (in total), preparation of a formal stormwater pollution and prevention plan (SWPPP) is not required, but SMUD would implement best management practices (BMPs) at each pole location in order to prevent/minimize erosion and control sediment. Should construction activities require additional area and the total area of disturbance may exceed one acre, SMUD would be subject to and comply with NPDES Statewide construction general permit for stormwater runoff (Order WQ-

2022-0057-DWQ and NPDES No. CAS000002 [Construction General Permit]), which would require preparation and implementation of a formal SWPPP. Additionally, SMUD would comply with the County of Sacramento Improvement Standards and Floodplain Management Ordinance, which ensures that the Project would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that causes flooding or that exceeds stormwater system capacity. Therefore, with implementation of existing erosion and siltation control requirements, impacts to surface and groundwater quality would be ***less than significant*** and no mitigation is required.



Source: Data downloaded from FEMA in 2023; adapted by Ascent in 2024

Figure 3.10-1 **Project Location**

b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

Less-than-Significant Impact. As described above under a), concrete would be used to secure the steel poles in 5-foot diameter holes and rocks would be used to secure wooden poles in 3-foot diameter holes. While the use of stabilizing concrete would create new areas of impervious surfaces, it would not be substantial because poles would be placed approximately 150-200 feet apart, and the area paved would be limited to a maximum of 20 square feet per pole (i.e., 5-foot diameter auger holes would be completely filed with concrete). No water, including groundwater, would be used during operation of the Project. Therefore, impacts to groundwater recharge would be ***less-than-significant*** impact, and no mitigation would be required.

c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:

i) Result in substantial on- or offsite erosion or siltation;

ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;

iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or

iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?

Less-than-Significant Impact. The Project's construction activities would include soil excavation using an auger to establish adequate foundations for power pole installation. Abandoned poles would be cut at their base, with the existing foundations remaining in place. The Project would not change drainage systems in the surrounding area, and would overall reduce the number of poles along the alignment. Therefore, the existing drainage patterns along the Project alignment would not be substantially altered. This impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation measures are required.

d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

Less-than-Significant Impact. The Project alignment is at an inland location that is outside of any ocean-related tsunami zones and not within proximity of a water body that could create a risk of seiche. While the majority of the Project alignment is within an area with reduced flood risk (Zone X); however, portions overlap with the 100-year and 500-year flood plan and are considered to be with special flood hazard areas, and other flood hazards as depicted in Figure 3.10-1. However, the Project includes installation of steel and wooden poles that would support powerlines, along an existing power line alignment. Upon completion of the Project, the alignment would support few poles located are greater distances than under the existing conditions. Because the use type along the alignment would not change, the Project would not increase the risk of release of pollutants due to inundation of the Project alignment. This impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation is required.

e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Less-than-Significant Impact. Project construction would adhere to the City's water quality and watershed protection measures mandated by the Phase I NPDES Permit and implemented through the SQIP. Throughout the operational phase, the Project would refrain from generating wastewater or stormwater runoff, thereby avoiding conflicts with or obstructions to a water quality control plan. While dewatering during construction is anticipated due to the elevated water table in the Project area, the extracted groundwater volume would be negligible in comparison to the overall groundwater supply. Dewatering plans would be subject to approval from Sacramento County's Department of Environmental Management and/or SWRCB. Additionally, Project operation would abstain from utilizing potable water, including groundwater. Because the Project's potential impacts would be limited to construction activities, this impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

3.11 Land Use and Planning

	ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
XI.	**Land Use and Planning. Would the project:**				
a)	Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b)	Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.11.1 Environmental Setting

The Project alignment is located within the community of Rio Linda in Sacramento County. In the northern Sacramento County and the northwestern portion of the City of Sacramento, the existing land use conditions reflect a mix of industrial and residential zones. Adjacent to the western edge of McClellan Air Business Park and along Phase 1 of the Project alignment, the community is characterized by a blend of industrial land uses and the proximity of the McClellan Sacramento Airport to the south. Toward the northwestern extents of Project alignment (Phases 2A and 2B), the land use transitions into a more residential setting and consist of the Census-designated place of Rio Linda.

Land use designations along the Project alignment include agricultural-residential and intensive industrial for areas within Sacramento County (Sacramento County 2011), and Employment Center Low Rise within the City of Sacramento (City of Sacramento 2017). The Project alignment is zoned as M1-Industrial within the City of Sacramento (City of Sacramento 2014) and as the McClellan Park Special Planning Area, Agricultural Residential and M1 – Light Industrial within portions located in Sacramento County (Sacramento County 2024).

3.11.2 Discussion

a) Physically divide an established community?

No Impact. The Project proposes to replace approximately 5.5 miles of an existing above-ground 12 kV cable with 69 kV and 12 kV cables along an existing alignment. No Project features would create a new physical division. Therefore, the Project would have ***no impact*** and no mitigation is required.

b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

Less-than-Significant Impact. As discussed above, the Project would replace approximately 5.5 miles of an existing above-ground 12 kV cable with 69 kV and 12 kV cables along an existing alignment. Land uses would not be changed due to implementation of the Project. Therefore, this impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

3.12 Mineral Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
XII. Mineral Resources. Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.12.1 Environmental Setting

The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act directs the State Geologist to classify (identify and map) the non-fuel mineral resources of the State to show where economically significant mineral deposits occur and where they are likely to occur based upon the best available scientific data. Areas known as Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs) are classified on the basis of geologic factors, without regard to existing land use and land ownership. The areas are categorized into four general classifications (MRZ-1 through MRZ-4). Of the four, the MRZ-2 classification is recognized in land use planning because the likelihood for occurrence of significant mineral deposits is high, and the classification may be a factor in the discovery and development of mineral deposits that would tend to be economically beneficial to society.

The Project alignment is classified as MRZ-1 which means adequate information indicates no significant mineral deposits in that area (DOC 2018). The Project alignment is not designated as a locally important mineral resource recovery site in the *Sacramento County General Plan Update* (Sacramento County 2010).

3.12.2 Discussion

a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?

No Impact. The Project alignment is classified as MRZ-1. No known mineral deposits are present in the Project alignment. Therefore, there would be ***no impact***, and no mitigation would be required.

b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?

No Impact. The Project alignment is not designated as a locally important mineral resource recovery site in the Sacramento County General Plan Update (Sacramento County 2010: Plate GS-5). Thus, Project implementation would not result in a loss of availability of locally important mineral resources, and the Project would have ***no impact*** related to the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource discovery site, and no mitigation would be required.

3.13 Noise

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
XIII. Noise. Would the project result in:				
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.13.1 Environmental Setting

Acoustic Fundamentals

Acoustics is the scientific study that evaluates perception, propagation, absorption, and reflection of sound waves. Sound is a mechanical form of radiant energy, transmitted by a pressure wave through a solid, liquid, or gaseous medium. Sound that is loud, disagreeable, unexpected, or unwanted is generally defined as noise. Noise is typically expressed in decibels (dB), which is a common measurement of sound energy.

A decibel is logarithmic; it does not follow normal algebraic methods and cannot be directly summed. Because decibels are logarithmic units, sound pressure levels (SPLs) cannot be added or subtracted through ordinary arithmetic. Under the decibel scale, a doubling of sound energy corresponds to a 3-dB increase. In other words, when two identical sources are each producing sound of the same loudness at the same time, the resulting sound level at a given distance would be 3 dB higher than if only one of the sound sources was producing sound under the same conditions. For example, if one idling truck generates an SPL of 70 dB, two trucks idling simultaneously would not produce 140 dB; rather, they would combine to produce 73 dB. Under the decibel scale, three sources of equal loudness together produce a sound level approximately 5 dB louder than one source.

The decibel scale alone does not adequately characterize how humans perceive noise. The dominant frequencies of a sound have a substantial effect on the human response to that sound. Although the intensity (energy per unit area) of the sound is a purely physical quantity, the loudness or human response is determined by the characteristics of the human ear. Human hearing is limited in the range of audible frequencies as well as in the way it perceives the SPL in that range. In general, people are most sensitive to the frequency range of 1,000–8,000 Hz and perceive sounds within this range better than sounds of the same amplitude with frequencies outside of this range. To approximate the response of the human ear, sound levels of individual frequency bands are weighted, depending on the human sensitivity to those

frequencies. Then, an “A-weighted” sound level (expressed in units of A-weighted decibels) can be computed based on this information.

The A-weighting network approximates the frequency response of the average young ear when listening to most ordinary sounds. When people make judgments of the relative loudness or annoyance of a sound, their judgment correlates well with the A-scale sound levels of those sounds. Thus, noise levels are typically reported in terms of A weighted decibels. All sound levels discussed in this study are expressed in A-weighted decibels.

Noise in our daily environment fluctuates over time. Various noise descriptors have been developed to describe time-varying noise levels. The following are the noise descriptors used throughout this study.

- **Equivalent Continuous Sound Level (L_{eq}):** L_{eq} represents an average of the sound energy occurring over a specified period. In effect, L_{eq} is the steady-state sound level containing the same acoustical energy as the time-varying sound level that occurs during the same period (Caltrans 2013: 2-48).

- **Maximum Sound Level (L_{max}):** L_{max} is the highest instantaneous sound level measured during a specific period (Caltrans 2013: 2-48; FTA 2018)

- **Vibration Decibels (VdB):** VdB is the vibration velocity level in decibel scale (FTA 2018: Table 5-1)

- **Peak Particle Velocity (PPV):** PPV is the peak signal value of an oscillating vibration waveform. Usually expressed in inches/second (in/sec) (FTA 2018: Table 5-1).

Noise Generation and Attenuation

Noise can be generated by many sources, including mobile sources such as automobiles, trucks, and airplanes and stationary sources such as activity at construction sites, machinery, and commercial and industrial operations. As sound travels through the atmosphere from the source to the receiver, noise levels attenuate (i.e., decrease) depending on ground absorption characteristics, atmospheric conditions, and the presence of physical barriers. Sound from a localized source (i.e., a point source) propagates uniformly outward in a spherical pattern. The sound level attenuates at a rate of 6 dB for each doubling of distance from a point source. Noise from a line source, such as a road or highway, propagates outward in a cylindrical pattern, often referred to as cylindrical spreading. Sound levels attenuate at a rate of 3 dB for each doubling of distance from a line source. Noise attenuation from ground absorption and reflective-wave canceling provides additional attenuation associated with geometric spreading. For acoustically absorptive sites such as soft dirt, grass, or scattered bushes and trees, an additional ground-attenuation value of 1.5 dB per doubling of distance is normally assumed. When added to the attenuation rate associated with cylindrical spreading, the additional ground attenuation results in an overall drop-off rate of 4.5 dB per doubling of distance. This would hold true for point sources, resulting in an overall drop-off rate of up to 7.5 dB per doubling of distance.

Atmospheric conditions such as wind speed, wind direction, turbulence, temperature gradients, and humidity also alter the propagation of noise and affect levels at a receiver. Furthermore, the presence of a barrier (e.g., topographic feature, intervening building, and dense vegetation) between the source and the receptor can provide substantial attenuation of noise levels at the

receiver. Natural (e.g., berms, hills, and dense vegetation) and human-made features (e.g., buildings and walls) may function as noise barriers.

To provide some context to noise levels described throughout this section, common sources of noise and associated noise levels are presented in Table 3.13-1.

Table 3.13-1 Typical Noise Sources

Common Outdoor Activities	Noise Level (dB)	Common Indoor Activities
	110	Rock band
Jet flyover at 1,000 feet	100	
Gas lawnmower at 3 feet	90	
Diesel truck moving at 50 mph at 50 feet	80	Food blender at 3 feet, garbage disposal at 3 feet
Noisy urban area, gas lawnmower at 100 feet	70	Vacuum cleaner at 10 feet, normal speech at 3 feet
Commercial area, heavy traffic at 300 feet	60	
Quiet urban daytime	50	Large business office, dishwasher in next room
Quiet urban nighttime	40	Theater, large conference room (background)
Quiet suburban nighttime	30	Library, bedroom at night, concert hall (background)
Quiet rural nighttime	20	Broadcast/recording studio
	10	
Threshold of human hearing	0	Threshold of human hearing

Notes: dB = A-weighted decibels; mph = miles per hour
Source: Caltrans 2013

Ground Vibration

Vibration is the periodic oscillation of a medium or object with respect to a given reference point. Ground-borne vibration is vibration of and through the ground. Ground-borne vibration can range from levels that are imperceptible by humans to levels that can create substantial damage to buildings and structures. Sources ground-borne of vibration include natural phenomena (e.g., earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, sea waves, landslides) and those introduced by human activity (e.g., explosions, machinery, traffic, trains, construction equipment). Vibration sources may be continuous, (e.g., operating factory machinery) or transient in nature (e.g., explosions). Vibration levels can be depicted in terms of amplitude and frequency, relative to displacement, velocity, or acceleration.

Noise- and Vibration-Sensitive Land Uses and Receptors

Noise-sensitive land uses are generally considered to include those uses where noise exposure could result in health-related risks to individuals, as well as places where quiet is an essential element of their intended purpose (e.g., schools and libraries), and historic buildings that could sustain structural damage due to vibration. The Project alignment covers approximately 5.5 miles and is located along the western edge of the McClellan Air Business Park and northward

within the community of Rio Linda in Sacramento County. There are sensitive receptors (i.e., residential uses) throughout the Project alignment along Winters Street, 20th Street, and Elkhorn Boulevard.

Local Noise Regulations

Sacramento County General Plan and Municipal Code

Although SMUD is not subject to the goals and policies of the County of Sacramento, the Noise Element of the *County of Sacramento General Plan* contains goals, policies, and standards related to noise. Policy NO-8 states that noise associated with construction activities shall adhere to the County Code requirements. Specifically, Section 6.68.090(e) addresses construction noise within the county. Additionally, Section 6.68.090(e) of the County Municipal Code exempts noise sources associated with construction provided the activities do not take place between 8:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. on weekdays or between 8:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. on weekends.

City of Sacramento General Plan and Municipal Code

Although SMUD is not subject to the goals and policies of the City of Sacramento, the City's 2035 General Plan Environmental Constraints Element contains noise policies and standards (e.g., exterior and interior noise-level performance standards for new projects affected by or including non-transportation noise sources, and maximum allowable noise exposure levels for transportation noise sources). The City of Sacramento General Plan Noise Element contains goals, policies, and standards related to noise. Policy EC 3.1.10 requires development projects subject to discretionary approval to assess potential construction noise impacts on nearby sensitive uses and to minimize impacts on these uses, to the extent feasible. City Code Section 8.68, Noise Control, establishes the City of Sacramento's noise standards and regulations. Specifically, Section 8.68.060, identifies the City's exterior noise standards for residential uses as 55 dB between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. and 50 dB from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Additionally, City Code Section 8.68.080, Exemptions, exempts noise sources due to the erection (including excavation), demolition, alteration or repair of any building or structure between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Sunday; provided, however, that the operation of an internal combustion engine shall not be exempt pursuant to this subsection if such engine is not equipped with suitable exhaust and intake silencers which are in good working order.

3.13.2 Discussion

a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?

Less-than-Significant Impact. The Project would result in a temporary increase in noise levels during construction as a result of heavy equipment movement and pavement removal, but no permanent increases in ambient noise levels would occur during operation.

Construction of the Project would occur over approximately 12 months. Construction activities would generate noise near individual sensitive receptors throughout the duration of the

construction period, but only for a short period of time due to the linear nature of construction activities. As detailed in Chapter 2, “Project Description,” construction would be consistent with the relevant City and County construction related noise ordinances. Thus, construction associated with the Project would occur between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. within the City of Sacramento and 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekdays and 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekends within the County of Sacramento. The City and County have not adopted their own construction-specific noise standards. Thus, the FTA construction noise standards are used to assess construction noise impacts. FTA has a daytime construction noise standard of 90 dB L_{eq} for residential uses and 100 dB L_{eq} for commercial/industrial uses (FTA 2018: 179).

Project construction activities that would generate the greatest noise levels would occur during the installation of steel poles. This activity would require the excavation of up to 20-foot-deep holes using a 5-foot diameter auger; a boom truck to install individual poles; and concrete to secure the poles in place. Noise modeling conservatively assumed the simultaneous operation of three pieces of heavy construction equipment (i.e., an auger drill rig, a concrete pump truck, and a flatbed truck). See Appendix C for detailed construction noise modeling. Based on the reference noise levels for these pieces of equipment, the combined noise level from this activity would reach approximately 79.3 dBA L_{eq} and 86 dBA L_{max} at 50 feet. Construction noise would exceed FTA’s daytime construction noise standard if residential uses are located within 15 feet of construction activities or if commercial/industrial uses are located within 5 feet of construction activities. See Appendix C for construction noise attenuation.

Noise generated by construction activities would be temporary and periodic in nature and would only occur during daytime hours when people are less sensitive to noise. As detailed above, both the City and County exempt construction noise during daytime hours. Additionally, the poles would be installed at least 15 feet of a residential use or within 5 feet of a commercial/industrial use, at which point noise would attenuate below FTA’s daytime construction noise standard. Thus, the Project would not generate a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels in excess of allowable standards in the vicinity of the Project. This impact would be ***less than significant*****,** and no mitigation would be required.

b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less-than-Significant Impact. Project construction would not involve the use of ground-vibration intensive activities, such as pile driving or blasting; however, construction may result in varying degrees of temporary ground vibration and noise levels due to the intermittent operation of construction equipment and activities. Pieces of equipment that generate lower levels of ground vibration, such as dozers and drills, would be used during construction. FTA guidance for maximum acceptable VdB levels are primarily concerned with sleep disturbance in residential areas and can be avoided by keeping exposures at or below 80 VdB during typical sleeping hours, or if the vibration events are infrequent (i.e., 30 per day).

Based on FTA reference vibration levels for typical construction equipment, caisson drilling generates vibration levels of 0.089 in/sec PPV and 87 VdB at 25 feet (FTA 2018: 184). Based on the recommended FTA procedure for applying a propagation adjustment to this reference level, vibration from the use of caisson drilling would exceed FTA significance criterion for structural damage (i.e., 0.20 PPV in/sec) within 15 feet and the criterion for impact of infrequent events on residences (i.e., 80 VdB) within 43 feet. Construction activities are not anticipated to occur within 43 feet of sensitive receptors. Additionally, construction would only take place during the less sensitive daytime hours in accordance with local standards. Thus, the Project

would not result in the exposure of the existing off-site receptors to excessive ground vibration levels. The impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

Less-than-Significant Impact. Sacramento McClellan Airport is located adjacent to the northern and eastern border of the Project alignment. As discussed in Section 3.9, "Hazards and Hazardous Materials," the airport's comprehensive land use plan identifies prohibited uses within the various safety zones including structures that might interfere with aircraft navigation (SACOG 1987:46-49), and the Project would comply with FAA Part 77, which prohibits construction that is more than 200 feet above ground level within the airport's area of influence (Caltrans 2011). Additionally, because the height of the utility poles would be consistent with the Airport Land Use Plan, it is not anticipated that changes in airport operations would occur due to the Project. Because implementation of the Project would not affect airport operations, airport noise levels along the Project alignment would remain the same as under the existing conditions. Therefore, this impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

3.14 Population and Housing

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
XIV. Population and Housing. Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.14.1 Environmental Setting

The Project alignment is partially located within the McClellan Business Park area, while the northern portions are located within the community of Rio Linda. The surrounding land uses are characterized by a mix of industrial and military uses and suburban/rural residences.

3.14.2 Discussion

a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

No Impact. The Project involves the replacement of aboveground power line poles and installation of new power line poles within roadways, rights-of-way, or utility easements. Project construction would be completed by SMUD's existing workforce. The Project would not generate any new residents in the area or provide any new jobs. Therefore, the Project would have ***no impact***, and no mitigation would be required.

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. No persons or homes would be displaced as a result of Project construction or operation. Therefore, the Project would have ***no impact***, and no mitigation would be required.

3.15 Public Services

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
XV. Public Services. Would the project:				
a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.15.1 Environmental Setting

Project alignment extends approximately 5.5 miles and is located along the western edge of the McClellan Air Business Park and northward within the community of Rio Linda, and travels within the City of Sacramento and unincorporated Sacramento County.

Fire Protection Services

The Sacramento Metropolitan Fire Department (Metro Fire) provides fire protection services to the portion of the Project alignment. The nearest stations to the Project alignment are Fire Station #112, located at 6801 34th Street in North Highlands, adjacent to the Project alignment at the northwest corner of the intersection of Elkhorn Boulevard and 34th Street; and Fire Station #115, located at 4727 Kilzer Ave in McClellan Park, approximately 0.2 miles east of Phase 1 of the Project alignment.

Police Protection Services

The Sacramento County Sheriff's Department (SCSD) is principally responsible for providing police protection services in the county of Sacramento, including the Project area. The Project alignment is located within District 1 (North West) of the North Division (SCSD 2024). The North Division is based at Garfield Station located at 5510 Garfield Avenue, approximately 4 miles southeast of the Project alignment.

The portion of the Project alignment located within the City of Sacramento is served by the Sacramento Police Department. The nearest Sacramento Police Department station is located at 3550 Marysville Boulevard, approximately 1 mile south of the southern extent of the Project alignment.

Schools

There is one public school adjacent to the Project alignment, Vineland Elementary School, located at the northeast corner of the intersection of "I" Street and 20th Street. Two public schools are located within one-quarter mile of the Project alignment, Bell Avenue Elementary School at 1900 Bell Avenue and Vista Nueva Career and Technology High School at 2035 "N" Street.

Parks and Other Public Facilities

The nearest park to the Project alignment is Dry Creek Parkway, a beltway park that extends north and south of "Q" Street, approximately 300 feet northwest from the Project alignment at the intersection of "Q" Street and 20th Street. Dry Creek Parkway provides trails, parks, and open space along Dry Creek and provides a cycling and walking corridor. Del Paso Regional Park is located approximately 0.6 miles southeast of the Project alignment. Del Paso Regional Park provides open space for citizens to walk or bike around in the area, and includes ball fields, a golf course, equestrian trails, and picnic areas (City of Sacramento 2022). Athletic fields at Vineland Elementary School are also available for public use.

3.15.2 Discussion

a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

Fire Protection

No Impact. Implementation of the Project would not increase demand for fire protection services because the Project would not generate new residents that may increase demand for services or develop additional structures that could expand service areas. Because the Project would not increase demand for fire protection services, no construction of new or expansion of existing fire service facilities would be required. Therefore, the Project would have ***no impact*** on fire protection services, and no mitigation would be required.

Police Protection

No Impact. Implementation of the Project would not increase demand for police protection services because the Project would not generate new residents that may increase demand for services or develop additional structures that could expand service areas. Because the Project would not increase demand for police protection services, no construction of new or expansion of existing police service facilities would be required. Therefore, the Project would have ***no impact*** on police facilities, and no mitigation would be required.

Schools

No Impact. The Project would not provide any new housing that would generate new students in the community nor result in an increase in employment opportunities that could indirectly contribute new students to the local school district. Therefore, the Project would have ***no impact*** on school services and facilities, and no mitigation would be required.

Parks

No Impact. The Project would not provide any new structures that could result in additional residents/employees, which could necessitate new or expanded parking facilities. Therefore, the Project would have ***no impact*** on parks, and no mitigation would be required.

Other Public Facilities

No Impact. No other public facilities exist in the Project area that could be affected by implementation of the Project. Therefore, the Project would have ***no impact*** on other public facilities, and no mitigation would be required.

3.16 Recreation

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
XVI. Recreation. Would the project:				
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.16.1 Environmental Setting

The Project alignment is located along the western edge of the McClellan Air Business Park and northward within the community of Rio Linda in Sacramento County, within the boundaries of the City of Sacramento and Sacramento County. The nearest park to the Project alignment is Dry Creek Parkway, a beltway park that extends north and south of "Q" Street, approximately 300 feet northwest from the Project alignment at the intersection of "Q" Street and 20th Street. Dry Creek Parkway provides trails, parks, and open space along Dry Creek and provides a cycling and walking corridor. Del Paso Regional Park is located approximately 0.6 miles southeast of the Project alignment. Del Paso Regional Park provides open space for citizens to walk or bike around in the area, and includes ball fields, a golf course, equestrian trails, and picnic areas (City of Sacramento 2022). Athletic fields at Vineland Elementary School are also available for public use.

3.16.2 Discussion

a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

No Impact. The Project does not include any new development that could increase the use of existing parks or recreational facilities. Therefore, the Project would have ***no impact***, and no mitigation would be required.

b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

No Impact. The Project does not include any new development that could necessitate new or expanded recreational facilities. Therefore, the Project would have ***no impact***, and no mitigation would be required.

3.17 Traffic and Transportation

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
XVII. Transportation/Traffic. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☒	☐	☐

3.17.1 Environmental Setting

Regional access to the Project alignment is available from the south via Interstate 80 (I-80). The Project alignment extends generally from a connection point approximately 140 feet south of the intersection of Winters Street and Rene Avenue, to the intersection of Q Street and 20th Street to the north, and the intersection of Elkhorn Boulevard and 34th Street to the east (see Figure 2-1). With the exception of Elkhorn Boulevard, which is 4-lanes wide and equipped with designated bicycle lanes, roadways along the Project alignment are paved two-way streets, with one lane of travel in each direction without bicycle facilities. No sidewalks or other pedestrian facilities are present along the Project alignment. Regional Transit Bus Line 19 runs along the portion of the Project alignment along Elkhorn Boulevard (Regional Transit 2024).

The Project involves replacing approximately 5.5 miles of an existing above-ground 12 kV cable with 69 kV and 12 kV cables. The Project would involve replacing or relocating approximately 140 power line poles, and newly installing approximately 10 power line poles where they did not previously exist. Poles would be places within existing rights-of-way, but would be placed outside of public roads, curbs, gutters, and sidewalks. The southern extent of the Project alignment begins approximately 0.3 miles north of the I-80 Winters Street on- and off-ramps; the eastern extent of the Project alignment is approximately 3.0 miles west of the I-80 Elkhorn Boulevard on- and off-ramps. No transit stops are located within the Project area. Winters Street is a four-lane rural road used primarily for local traffic by surrounding residents to connect to Interstate 80 (I-80). 20th Street is a two-lane rural road used primarily for local traffic by surrounding residents. Elkhorn Boulevard is a four-lane road that connects the community of Rio Linda and surrounding Sacramento County and City of Sacramento residents to State Route 99. On-street bicycle lanes are provided along Elkhorn Boulevard, as well as other streets within and near the Project alignment.

3.17.2 Discussion

a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. As discussed above, the Project alignment is located within SMUD's existing right-of-way. Project construction would involve temporary staging of materials on flatbed trucks within the roadway and shoulder. During site preparation, auguring, and placement of poles, up to an entire lane may be used for staging. While roadway conditions would be restored to their pre-Project conditions, roadway, bicycle, transit access, and pedestrian throughfare may be temporarily affected during construction. Thus, there may be conflicts with circulation during construction. This impact would be potentially significant.

Mitigation Measure 3.17-1: Traffic Control Plan

Prior to Project construction within or adjacent to public roadways, SMUD's shall develop a traffic control plan for the Project and submit the plan to the County of Sacramento's Right of Way Management Section and the City's Department of Transportation for approval. The plan shall identify temporary vehicular lanes, bicycle lanes, pedestrian routes, and transit stop closures and provide information regarding how access and connectivity and emergency access will be maintained during construction activities. The plan shall include details regarding traffic controls that would be employed, including signage, detours, and flaggers. The traffic control plan shall be implemented by SMUD during construction to allow for the safe passage of vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists along the Project alignment.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.17-1 would reduce impacts associated with the conflicts to the circulation system by requiring traffic controls, such as signage, detours, and flaggers and temporary lane, bicycle lane, pedestrian route, and transit stop closures that would preserve accessibility, connectivity, and emergency access during construction activities. Therefore, this impact would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level.

b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3(b), which pertains to vehicle miles travelled?

Less-than-Significant Impact. Temporary construction activities would result in slight increases in vehicle trips associated with worker commutes and materials (i.e., poles, gravel, concrete) delivery (approximately 5-10 trips per day to support 5 workers are expected). However, these additional trips would occur only during the construction period. During operation, no new vehicle trips would be generated, because operation of the Project would be limited to maintenance activities that would be similar to those required for the existing powerline along the Project alignment. Because the Project would not change the amount of development projected for the area, would be consistent with the population growth and vehicle miles traveled projections in regional and local plans, and would result in only a slight increase in vehicle miles traveled during construction, this impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation is required.

c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

Less-than-Significant Impact. Project operation would not result in any changes in road geometry or new uses. The proposed changes, including the replacement, relocation, and installation of poles, have been carefully planned to accommodate existing uses and specific siting considerations. The Project does not include any changes to roadway design or use. Therefore, impacts related to traffic hazards would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation is required.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. As previously discussed, Project operation would not alter any existing roads, including areas provided for emergency access. Project construction would involve temporary lane closures, which have the potential to impact access for emergency vehicles. This impact would be potentially significant.

Mitigation Measure 3.17-1: Traffic Control Plan *(described above)*

During the construction, implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.17-1 would reduce impacts related to inadequate emergency access during construction by requiring implementation of a plan to maintain access for emergency vehicles during construction. Therefore, impacts related to emergency access would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level.

3.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
XVIII. Tribal Cultural Resources.				
Has a California Native American Tribe requested consultation in accordance with Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1(b)?		☐ Yes		☒ No
Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k)?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?	☐	☒	☐	☐

3.18.1 Environmental Setting

Ethnographic Setting

The County and City of Sacramento and the surrounding area are known to have been occupied by Native American groups for thousands of years prior to settlement by non-Native peoples. Archaeological materials, including human burials, have been found throughout the city. Human burials outside of formal cemeteries often occur in precontact contexts. Areas of high sensitivity for tribal cultural resources are located within close proximity to the Sacramento and American rivers and other watercourses (Ascent 2024: 24).

The Project alignment is located in the traditional Native American territory of the Nisenan, or Southern Maidu. The Nisenan are the southernmost linguistic group of the Maidu Penutian language family. Three Nisenan dialects are recognized: Northern Hill, Southern Hill, and Valley Nisenan. The territory associated with Valley Nisenan speakers extended from the present-day location of present-day Old Sacramento to the crest of the Sierras and includes the Project alignment. Valley Nisenan settlements were located on low, natural rises along streams and rivers or on gentle, south-facing slopes. Populations within the settlements are estimated to have varied from 15 or more for smaller occupation sites and satellite villages, and up to 500 or more in large villages.

Although acorns were a staple food collected in the fall and then stored in granaries, Valley Nisenan also relied on a wide range of abundant natural resources. Large and small mammals, such as pronghorn antelope, deer, tule elk, black bears, cottontails, and jackrabbits, among

other species, were hunted by individuals or by communal effort. Game birds, waterfowl, and fish, particularly salmon, were also important components of the Nisenan diet. In addition to acorns, plant resources included pine nuts, buckeye nuts, berries, grass seeds, herbs, and underground tubers. To procure these resources, Valley Nisenan employed a variety of tools, implements, and enclosures for hunting, collecting, and processing natural resources. The bow and arrow, snares, traps, nets, and enclosures or blinds were used for hunting land mammals and birds. For fishing, they made canoes from tule, balsa, or logs, and used harpoons, hooks, nets, and basketry traps. To collect plant resources, sharpened digging sticks, long poles for dislodging acorns and pinecones, and a variety of basketry such as seed beaters, burden baskets, and carrying nets, were utilized. Foods were processed with a variety of tools, such as bedrock mortars, cobblestone pestles, anvils, and portable stone or wooden mortars that were used to grind or mill acorns and seeds. Additional tools and implements included knives, anvils, leaching baskets and bowls, woven parching trays, and woven strainers and winnowers (Ascent 2024: 25).

Another key component of Valley Nisenan life was their participation in an extensive east-west trade network between the coast and the Great Basin. From coastal groups marine shell (Olivella and Haliotis) and steatite moved eastward, while salt and obsidian traveled westward from the Sierras and Great Basin. Basketry, an important trade item, moved in both directions.

The traditional culture and lifeways of the Valley Nisenan and Nisenan in general were disrupted beginning in the early 1800s. Although Spanish explorers entered their territory as early as 1808, there is no record of the forced movement of any Nisenan to the missions, at least no evidence similar to that recorded for the neighboring Plains Miwok. Regardless, Valley Nisenan and other Indigenous peoples were affected by land grant settlements and devastated by foreign disease epidemics that swept through the densely populated Central Valley. In particular, an epidemic presumed to be malaria, swept through the Sacramento Valley in 1833, wiping out entire villages and causing the death of an estimated 75 percent of the Valley Nisenan population. Not long after in 1839, Captain John Sutter settled into the area and conscripted many of the surviving local Indigenous peoples to work for him at his fort and various other endeavors.

As the 19th Century advanced, additional impacts to Valley Nisenan traditional lifeways resulted from the California Gold Rush in 1849. As a steady influx of non-native people exploited their lands and wasted their resources, many lifeways of the Valley Nisenan, as well as neighboring groups, were irretrievably interrupted. As a result, surviving Valley Nisenan either retreated to the foothills and mountains, or became domestics and laborers for the expanding ranching, farming, and mining industries.

Despite these major and devastating historical setbacks, today many Native Americans in the vicinity of the Project alignment are maintaining traditional cultural practices. Sometimes supported by thriving business enterprises, Tribal groups maintain governments, historic preservation programs, education programs, cultural events, and numerous other programs that sustain a vibrant culture (Ascent 2024: 25).

Tribal Consultation

Assembly Bill (AB) 52, signed by Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., in September 2014, established a new class of resources under CEQA: “[T]ribal cultural resources”. AB 52, as provided in Public Resource Code Sections 21080.3.1, 21080.3.2, and 21082.3, requires that

lead agencies undertaking CEQA review must, upon written request of a California Native American Tribe, begin consultation once the lead agency determines that the application for the Project is complete, prior to the issuance of a NOP of an EIR or notice of intent to adopt a negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration.

On November 22, 2023, SMUD sent emails and certified letters to the Ione Band of Miwok Indians, United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria (UAIC), Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, and Wilton Rancheria. UAIC responded that no consultation is required for this project and provided unanticipated discovery mitigation measures for the project as an attachment. In addition, Ione Band of Miwok Indians responded that they defer comments to the other tribes and also provided unanticipated discovery mitigation measures for the project as an attachment. No responses were received from the other two Tribes. Therefore, no consultation occurred under AB 52 and no Tribal cultural resources were identified.

3.18.2 Discussion

Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k)?

b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. As described in Section 3.5, Cultural Resources, the cultural resources study prepared for the Project indicated that no known archaeological resources that could be considered Tribal cultural resources, are located on the Project alignment or in the Project vicinity. Based on the survey results and disturbed nature of the Project alignment and surrounding area, there is a low probability for Tribal cultural resources to occur on the site. Additionally, following letters sent to tribes on November 24, 2023, no Tribes requested project consultation pursuant to PRC 21080.3.1. Although no Tribal cultural resources have been identified and no Tribes requested consultation, it is still possible that unanticipated Tribal cultural resources could be uncovered during ground disturbing Project activities. This impact would be potentially significant.

Mitigation Measure 3.18-1a: Implement Worker Cultural Resources Awareness and Respect Training Program

SMUD shall provide a cultural resources awareness and respect training program to all construction personnel active along the Project alignment prior to the start of Project implementation and to any new workers who start on the Project after starting. The program includes relevant information regarding Tribal cultural resources, including

applicable laws and regulations, the consequences of violating said laws and regulations, protocols for resource avoidance, and protocols for discoveries. The program also underscores the requirement for confidentiality and culturally-appropriate treatment of any find of significance to Native Americans and protocols, consistent to the extent feasible, with Native American Tribal values.

Mitigation Measure 3.18-1b: Halt Ground Disturbance Upon Discovery of Subsurface Tribal Cultural Resources

If any suspected Tribal cultural resources or unique archaeological resources are discovered during ground disturbing construction activities, all work shall cease within 100 feet of the find, or a distance agreed upon by the Tribal monitor, archaeological monitor, SMUD, and the construction foreman based on the location and nature of the find and type of work occurring. The Tribal monitor shall determine if the find is a Tribal cultural resource. The Tribal monitor will make recommendations for further evaluation and culturally appropriate treatment of discovered Tribal cultural resources as necessary in consultation with the archaeological monitor.

Unless another type of treatment is recommended, resources will be preserved in place by redesigning the Project unless redesign is determined by SMUD, with evidence, to be technologically, regulatorily, or economically infeasible. Redesign could include modifying the route of the alignment; and route modification would remain within the boundary of the Project study area. If redesign is demonstrated to be infeasible, culturally appropriate treatment would be developed in consultation with the participating Tribes. Culturally appropriate treatment may include, but is not limited to, processing materials for reburial, minimizing handling of cultural objects, leaving objects in place within the landscape, returning objects to a location within the Project area where they will not be subject to future impacts from the Project. Because curation of Tribal cultural resources is not considered by the participating Tribes to be appropriate or respectful, participating Tribes request that materials not be permanently curated, unless approved by the participating Tribes.

Work at the discovery location cannot resume until all necessary investigation, evaluation, and treatment of the discovery under the requirements of the CEQA, including AB 52, have been satisfied. Implementation of this mitigation measure would also satisfy State and local regulations regarding the treatment of Tribal cultural resources as well as Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code and PRC 5097 regarding the treatment of human remains.

Implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.18-1a and 3.18-1b would reduce potential impact to unanticipated tribal cultural resources discovered during Project construction activities by requiring minimization and avoidance measures and Tribal cultural awareness and respect training. Upon implementation of these mitigation measures, impacts would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level.

3.19 Utilities

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
XIX. Utilities and Service Systems. Would the project:				
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.19.1 Environmental Setting

The Project alignment is located along an existing 12 kV distribution line within an urbanized area of the County. Natural gas provisions are supplied to areas along the Project alignment from PG&E. The urban and urbanizing areas of the County, including the Cities of Rancho Cordova, Elk Grove and Citrus Heights, are divided into three zones of the Sacramento County Water Agency, a statutorily created district operating under the authority of and pursuant to the provisions of the Sacramento County Water Agency Act (West's California Codes, Water Code Appendix, Chapter 66, commencing at Section 66-1, et seq.; Deering's California Codes, Water, Uncodified Acts, Act 6730a). These zones are identified as 11A, 11B, and 11C. The Project alignment is located within Zone 11c, which includes the Dry Creek and Steelhead Creek (Natomas East Main Drainage Canal) tributary watersheds. Stormwater management within this zone contains roadside ditches and culvert crossings (Sacramento County 2021).

The nearest landfill to the Project alignment is the Sacramento County Kiefer Landfill, which is permitted for a maximum throughput of 10,815 tons per day. As of 2005, Kiefer landfill was estimated to operate until January 1, 2064 (CalRecycle 2024).

3.19.2 Discussion

a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Less than Significant. The Project would not require municipal water, wastewater treatment, stormwater drainage, natural gas, or telecommunication provisions and therefore would not affect these facilities.

The Project involves upgrading SMUD's transmission capacity, necessitating the replacement and relocation of electric power facilities. As discussed throughout this document, all potentially significant impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through implementation of mitigation measures.

With regard to stormwater drainage facilities, some of the poles would be located within roadside ditches that may be associated with the Sacramento County Water Agency's stormwater drainage system. However, the Project would result in a reduced number of poles compared to the existing conditions and would not substantially modify the drainage conditions along the Project alignment. Therefore, the impact is ***less than significant***, and no mitigation is required.

b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

No impact. The Project would involve replacing or relocating approximately power line poles and does not create a demand for water supplies. There would be ***no impact*** on water supplies, and no mitigation is required.

c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

No impact. The Project would not generate wastewater. There would be ***no impact*** to wastewater treatment capacity, and no mitigation is required.

d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?

e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Less-than-Significant Impact. The Project would only generate solid waste during construction activities. Project construction would require relocation or replacement of existing power line poles, 12 kV cables, and outdated electrical equipment. Installation and relocation of the new and existing power line poles and would generate various construction-period wastes, including power poles, finishing materials, various metals, and other recyclable and non-recyclable construction-related wastes.

Compliance with the updated 2022 CALGreen Code (24 CCR Part 11) would result in a reduction of construction waste and increase recycling. Implementation of the CALGreen Code would significantly reduce construction-related waste. Landfilled waste would be delivered to facilities that have a large volume of landfill capacity available to serve the Project during construction. The majority of landfilled waste would be delivered to the Sacramento County Kiefer Landfill. As discussed above under Section 3.19.1, “Environmental Setting,” based on the remaining capacity and typical throughput rates, the Sacramento County Kiefer Landfill is estimated to be operational until 2064, well beyond the anticipated construction period of 12 months. Project waste would be limited to one or two poles per day, as well as finishing materials, various metals, and other recyclable and non-recyclable construction-related wastes. This level of waste would not account for a substantial portion of the maximum permitted throughput of 10,815 tons per day, as it would account for less than one ton of waste.

The Project would not generate operational waste as it involves the replacement of existing electrical lines. and does not produce any waste post-construction. Therefore, this impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation is required.

3.20 Wildfire

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XX. Wildfire.				
Is the project located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as high fire hazard severity zones?				
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:		☐ Yes		☒ No
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☐
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☐	☐	☐
c) Require the installation of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☐
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.20.1 Environmental Setting

The Project alignment is located within a Local Responsibility Area that is designated as a Non-Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (CAL FIRE 2023). The Project alignment is primarily surrounded by residential and industrial land uses. Undeveloped land is present along the Project alignment within a vernal pool preserve located south of Ascot Avenue and west of Patrol Road, and south of Elkhorn Boulevard within land associated with the McClellan Airport. Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District provides fire protection and emergency rescue services to areas associated with the Project alignment. The nearest stations to the Project alignment are Fire Station #112, located at 6801 34th Street in North Highlands, adjacent to the Project alignment at the northwest corner of the intersection of Elkhorn Boulevard and 34th Street; and Fire Station #115, located at 4727 Kilzer Ave in McClellan Park, approximately 0.2 miles east of Phase 1 of the Project alignment (Metro Fire 2024).

3.20.2 Discussion

a) **Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?**

b) **Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?**

c) **Require the installation of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?**

d) **Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?**

No Impact. The Project would not exacerbate wildfire risks because the Project alignment is not located within a high or very high wildfire hazard zone and would not expose people or structures to wildfire risks. Construction equipment would be stored away from vegetation that could provide fire fuel if ignited. In addition, vegetation would be removed or trimmed on the Project alignment, as needed, to ensure that construction activities do not increase risks associated with wildfires. Thus, the Project would not affect the potential for wildfires to ignite or spread within areas surrounding the Project alignment. There would be ***no impact***, and no mitigation is required.

3.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVIII. Mandatory Findings of Significance.				
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Authority: Public Resources Code Sections 21083, 21083.5.

Reference: Government Code Sections 65088.4.
Public Resources Code Sections 21080, 21083.5, 21095; *Eureka Citizens for Responsible Govt. v. City of Eureka* (2007) 147 Cal.App.4th 357; *Protect the Historic Amador Waterways v. Amador Water Agency* (2004) 116 Cal.App.4th at 1109; *San Franciscans Upholding the Downtown Plan v. City and County of San Francisco* (2002) 102 Cal.App.4th 656.

3.21.1 Discussion

a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. As discussed in Section 3.4, "Biological Resources," of this IS/MND, ground disturbance associated with the Project would occur within previously disturbed land, and as explained in Section 3.4, "Biological Resources," six special-status plant species have the potential to occur within the Project alignment. Work activities adjacent to wetland features could cause indirect temporary impacts to habitat through sediment runoff into these features. In addition, vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*) and vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardi*), western spadefoot, and western pond turtle may be present within the Project alignment and could be adversely affect through Project construction. Implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.4-1, 3.4-2, 3.4-3, 3.4-4, 3.4-5, 3.4-6, and 3.4-7 would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level because vernal pools would be avoided. The Project has potential to adversely affect Swainson's hawk, white-tailed kite,

and other nesting birds. Potentially significant impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.4-1 and 3.4-8. Project construction may result in impacts to state or federally protected aquatic resources. With implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.4-1 through 3.4-4, potential impacts to state or federally protected aquatic resources would be reduced to ***a less-than-significant*** level.

As discussed in Section 3.5, "Cultural Resources," three historic-period archaeological site was discovered during the pedestrian survey. Although the Project overlaps the boundaries of P-34-000658 and P-34-005408, the Project as currently designed would not affect the physical aspects of these two resources. In addition, records search revealed one historic era archaeological site within the Project alignment (P-34-000654). This archaeological site was identified during the pedestrian survey, and it was determined that the Project as currently designed would not affect the physical aspects of this site because no poles or foundations are proposed within its boundary. However, components of the Project that require earth-moving and excavation may result in the discovery of previously unrecorded archaeological deposits. These activities could damage or destroy previously undiscovered unique archaeological resources pursuant to Section 15064.5. Mitigation Measure 3.5-1 would reduce potential impacts to archaeological resources discovered during Project construction activities to a ***less-than-significant*** level by requiring construction monitoring and, in the case of a discovery, preservation options (including data recovery, mapping, capping, or avoidance) and proper curation if significant artifacts are recovered.

b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Project impacts would be individually limited and not cumulatively considerable due to the site-specific nature of the potential impacts. The potentially significant impacts to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, tribal cultural resources, and traffic can be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of recommended mitigation measures. These impacts would be related to construction activities, would be temporary in nature, and would not substantially contribute to any potential cumulative impacts associated with these topics.

Potentially significant impacts to air quality would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.3-1. Potentially significant impacts to biological resources would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.4-1 through 3.4-8. Potentially significant cultural resources impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels with implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.5-1. Potentially significant impacts to paleontological resources would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.7-1. Potentially significant impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials be reduced to a less-than-significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.9-1. Potentially significant traffic and transportation impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of 3.17-1. Potentially significant tribal cultural resources impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.18-1a and 3.18-1b.

The Project would have no impact or less than significant impacts to the following environmental areas: aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse

gas emissions, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, utilities and service systems, and wildfire. Therefore, the Project would not substantially contribute to any potentially cumulative impacts for these topics. All environmental impacts that could occur as a result of the Project would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through the implementation of the mitigation measures recommended in this document. Implementation of these measures would ensure that the impacts of the Project would be below established thresholds of significance and that these impacts would not combine with the impacts of other cumulative projects to result in a cumulatively considerable impact on the environment. Therefore, this impact would be ***less than significant***.

c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The Project would have potentially significant impacts related to biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, and tribal cultural resources. However, all of these impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels with incorporation of the mitigation measures included in the respective section discussions above. No other direct or indirect impacts on human beings were identified in this IS/MND. Therefore, this impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE EVALUATION

4.1 Introduction

At present, there are no direct references to the evaluation of environmental justice (EJ) as an environmental topic in the Appendix G Environmental Checklist, CEQA statute, or State CEQA Guidelines; however, requirements to evaluate inconsistencies with general, regional, or specific plans (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15125[d]) and determine whether there is a "conflict" with a "policy" "adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect" (Environmental Checklist Section XI[b]) can implicate EJ policies. As additional cities and counties comply with Senate Bill (SB) 1000 (2016), which requires local jurisdictions to adopt EJ policies when two or more general plan elements are amended, environmental protection policies connected to EJ will become more common.

"Environmental Justice" is defined in California law as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and national origins with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies (California Government Code Section 30107.3[a]). "Fair treatment" can be defined as a condition under which "no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group, shall bear a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies" (EPA 2011).

SMUD created the Sustainable Communities Initiative, which encompasses the framework of EJ, to help bring environmental equity and economic vitality to all communities in SMUD's service area with special attention to historically underserved neighborhoods. The initiative focuses on the development of holistically sustainable neighborhoods through partnerships and collaboration. The goal of this effort is to ensure the advancement of prosperity in the Sacramento region regardless of zip code or socioeconomic status by focusing on equitable access to mobility, a prosperous economy, a healthy environment, and social well-being. To support the initiative, SMUD teams are working internally and with community partners to improve equitable access to healthy neighborhood environments, energy efficiency programs and services, environmentally friendly transit modes (including electric vehicles), and energy-related workforce development and economic development prospects. To the extent these goals seek to avoid environmental impacts affecting vulnerable communities, the State CEQA Guidelines already require consideration of whether a Project may conflict with goals that support sustainable communities. The following analysis has been provided by SMUD, as a proactive evaluation in excess of CEQA requirements, to identify any localized existing conditions to which the Project, as proposed, may worsen adverse conditions and negatively impact the local community and identifies the need for implementation of additional site or local considerations, where necessary. Environmental justice issues are being considered in this CEQA document to help inform decision makers about whether the Project supports SMUD's goal of helping to advance environmental justice and economic vitality to all communities in SMUD's service area with special attention to historically underserved neighborhoods.

4.2 Regulatory Context

California legislation, state agency programs, and guidance have been issued in recent years that aim to more comprehensively address EJ issues, including SB 1000 (2016), SB 535

(2012) and Assembly Bill (AB) 1550 (2016), AB 617 (2017), the California Department of Justice Bureau of Environmental Justice, the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen), and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research's (OPR's) 2020 General Plan Guidelines, Environmental Justice Element. In particular, SB 1000 has provided an impetus to more broadly address EJ; coupled with the existing requirements of CEQA, it is now time to elevate the coverage of significant environmental impacts in the context of EJ in environmental documents. These other bills have also provided the necessary policy direction to address EJ under CEQA.

4.2.1 Senate Bill 1000

SB 1000, which was enacted in 2016, amended California Government Code Section 65302 to require that general plans include an EJ element or EJ-related goals, policies, and objectives in other elements of general plans with respect to disadvantaged communities (DACs) beginning in 2018. The EJ policies are required when a city or county adopts or revises two or more general plan elements and the city or county contains a DAC. EJ-related policies must aim to reduce the disproportionate health risks in DACs, promote civic engagement in the public decision-making process, and prioritize improvements that address the needs of DACs (California Government Code Section 65302[h]). Policies should focus on improving the health and overall well-being of vulnerable and at-risk communities through reductions in pollution exposure, increased access to healthy foods and homes, improved air quality, and increased physical activity.

4.2.2 Senate Bill 535 and Assembly Bill 1550

Authorized by the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32), the cap-and-trade program is one of several strategies that California uses to reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs) that cause climate change. The state's portion of the cap-and-trade auction proceeds are deposited in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) and used to further the objectives of AB 32. In 2012, the California Legislature passed SB 535 (de Leon), directing that 25 percent of the proceeds from the GGRF go to projects that provide a benefit to DACs. In 2016, the legislature passed AB 1550 (Gomez), which now requires that 25 percent of proceeds from the GGRF be spent on projects located in DACs. The law requires the investment plan to allocate (1) a minimum of 25 percent of the available moneys in the fund to projects located within and benefiting individuals living in DACs; (2) an additional minimum of 5 percent to projects that benefit low-income households or to projects located within, and benefiting individuals living in, low-income communities located anywhere in the state; and (3) an additional minimum of 5 percent either to projects that benefit low-income households that are outside of, but within 0.5 mile of, DACs, or to projects located within the boundaries of, and benefiting individuals living in, low-income communities that are outside of, but within 0.5 mile of, DACs.

4.2.3 Assembly Bill 617

AB 617 of 2017 aims to help protect air quality and public health in communities around industries subject to the state's cap-and-trade program for GHG emissions. AB 617 imposes a new state-mandated local program to address nonvehicular sources (e.g., refineries, manufacturing facilities) of criteria air pollutants and toxic air contaminants. The bill requires the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to identify high-pollution areas and directs air districts to focus air quality improvement efforts through the adoption of community emission reduction

programs in these identified areas. Currently, air districts review individual stationary sources and impose emissions limits on emitters based on best available control technology, pollutant type, and proximity to nearby existing land uses. This bill addresses the cumulative and additive nature of air pollutant health effects by requiring communitywide air quality assessment and emission reduction planning, called a community risk reduction plan in some jurisdictions. CARB has developed a statewide blueprint that outlines the process for identifying affected communities, statewide strategies to reduce emissions of criteria air pollutants and toxic air contaminants, and criteria for developing community emissions reduction programs and community air monitoring plans.

4.2.4 California Department of Justice's Bureau of Environmental Justice

In February 2018, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra announced the establishment of a Bureau of Environmental Justice within the Environmental Section at the California Department of Justice. The purpose of the bureau is to enforce environmental laws, including CEQA, to protect communities disproportionately burdened by pollution and contamination. The bureau accomplishes this through oversight and investigation and by using the law enforcement powers of the Attorney General's Office to identify and pursue matters affecting vulnerable communities.

In 2012, then Attorney General Kamala Harris published a fact sheet titled, "Environmental Justice at the Local and Regional Level," highlighting existing provisions in the California Government Code and CEQA principles that provide for the consideration of EJ in local planning efforts and CEQA. Attorney General Becerra cites the fact sheet on his web page, indicating its continued relevance.

4.2.5 California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool

CalEnviroScreen is a mapping tool developed by the Office of Environmental Health Hazards Assessment to help identify low-income census tracts in California that are disproportionately burdened by and vulnerable to multiple sources of pollution. It uses environmental, health, and socioeconomic information based on data sets available from state and federal government sources to produce scores for every census tract in the state. Scores are generated using 20 statewide indicators that fall into four categories: exposures, environmental effects, sensitive populations, and socioeconomic factors. The exposures and environmental effects categories characterize the pollution burden that a community faces, whereas the sensitive populations and socioeconomic factors categories define population characteristics.

CalEnviroScreen prioritizes census tracts based on their combined pollution burden and population characteristics score, from low to high. A percentile for the overall score is then calculated from the ordered values. The California Environmental Protection Agency has designated the top 25 percent of highest scoring tracts in CalEnviroScreen (i.e., those that fall in or above the 75th percentile) as DACs, which are targeted for investment proceeds under SB 535, the state's cap-and-trade program.

4.2.6 Governor's Office of Planning and Research's 2020 Updated EJ Element Guidelines

OPR published updated General Plan Guidelines in June 2020 that include revised EJ guidance in response to SB 1000. OPR has also published example policy language in an appendix document along with several case studies to highlight EJ-related policies and initiatives that can be considered by other jurisdictions. Section 4.8 of the General Plan Guidelines contains the EJ guidance. The guidelines offer recommendations for identifying vulnerable communities and reducing pollution exposure related to health conditions, air quality, project siting, water quality, and land use compatibility related to industrial and large-scale agricultural operations, childcare facilities, and schools, among other things. It provides many useful resources, including links to research, tools, reports, and sample general plans.

4.3 Sensitivity of Project Location

4.3.1 Community Description

As part of its Sustainable Communities Initiative, SMUD created and maintains the Sustainable Communities Resource Priorities Map,[1] which reflects several data sets related to community attributes that SMUD uses to identify historically underserved communities. One of the key components of the map is the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen Version 3.0), which identifies communities facing socioeconomic disadvantages or health disadvantages such as multiple sources of pollution. The Sustainable Communities Resource Priorities map provides an analysis of current data sets to indicate areas ranging from low to high sensitivity and can be used to describe the relevant socioeconomic characteristics and current environmental burdens of the Project area can be described. SMUD has determined that it will evaluate EJ effects for projects located in, adjacent to, or proximate to (e.g., within 500 feet of) a high-sensitivity area as shown on the Sustainable Communities Resource Priorities Map or located in a census tract with a CalEnviroScreen score of 71 percent or greater. The map was launched in 2020 and updated in December 2022.

The proposed Project alignment is located in areas designated as medium/high, medium, and medium/low sensitivity areas per the Sustainable Communities Resource Priorities Map (SMUD 2024). The nearest high-sensitivity area is located approximately 0.6-mile from the southern extent of the Project alignment. The Project area's sensitivity is due to its designation as an Opportunity Zone, a Disadvantaged Communities by state Senate Bill 535, an area where 25 percent of the population have an income below the Federal poverty line, and an area within high and medium zones for social vulnerability to climate change.

The Project is located in a census tract with a CalEnviroScreen scores ranging from 90-95 percent toward the southern extent of the alignment, 65-70 percent within western portion, and 55-60 percent at the eastern extent of the alignment. The high CalEnviroScreen score (90-95 percent) is associated with McClellan Airport and is driven by high pollution and low population levels. The pollution burden of the census tract is from low drinking water quality, a high concentration of groundwater and soil cleanup sites and solid waste facilities. The population characteristics of the census tract that contribute to a community's pollution burden and

[1] The Sustainable Communities Resource Priorities Map is available at https://usage.smud.org/SustainableCommunities/?_ga=2.223364443.1927542179.1598288052-1197903775.1589235097.

vulnerability include a high number of people experiencing asthma, low birth weight, cardiovascular disease, poverty, low housing affordability, and unemployment.

4.4 Environmental Conditions

This discussion references the analysis conducted in the Environmental Checklist of the IS/MND and provides additional detail with respect to the current environmental conditions in the Project area. Within CalEnviroScreen, the census tracts associated with the Project alignment's score is largely driven by the identification (within CalEnviroScreen) of the soil and groundwater conditions associated with McClellan Airport. The focus of this discussion is on environmental justice issues relevant to the Project.

- **Aesthetics:** The visual character of the Project alignment and the surrounding area is typical of the Sacramento County metropolitan area, which includes commercial and industrial buildings, residences, roads, utility lines, trees, and landscaping. A prominent feature along the Project alignment is the McClellan Airport.

- **Air Quality:** The Project alignment is located in an area adjacent to residential and industrial areas. Nearby industrial uses can contribute toxic air contaminants to the area during operation. Nearby receptors include residences along Winters Street, 20th Street, and Elkhorn Boulevard, several churches (True Life Church of God, New Testament Baptist Church, and New Life Church), and two schools (Vineland Preschool and Stillwaters Christian School).

- **Cultural Resources:** As noted in Section 3.5, "Cultural Resources," there are three known cultural resources along the Project alignment. However, the Project as currently designed would not alter or affect the physical aspect of these three sites and features.

- **Energy:** The area surrounding the Project alignment is served by SMUD for electricity and PG&E for natural gas. SMUD offers the Greenergy program that provides electricity generated with 100 percent renewable and carbon-free resources.

- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change Vulnerabilities:** The Project alignment is in an area that would likely be subject to increased heat stress from climate change. The Project alignment partially overlaps with a 100-year flood zone associated with Robla Creek (Sacramento County 2015).

- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** A majority of the alignment for Phase I runs adjacent to, or within the boundaries of the McClellan Business Park, which was historically a part of the McClellan Air Force Base (AFB). McClellan AFB was an active military facility from 1939 to 2001, and an AFB was identified for closure in 2001 under the Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) and soil and groundwater remediation activities have been conducted under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).

- **Noise:** The Project alignment covers approximately 5.5 miles and is located along the western edge of the McClellan Air Business Park and northward within the community of Rio Linda in Sacramento County. There are sensitive receptors (i.e., residential uses)

throughout the Project alignment along Winters Street, 20th Street, and Elkhorn Boulevard.

- **Public Services:** Public services such as police and fire protection are available in the area.

- **Recreation:** The nearest park to the Project alignment is Dry Creek Parkway, a beltway park that extends north and south of "Q" Street, approximately 300 feet northwest from the Project alignment at the intersection of "Q" Street and 20th Street.

- **Transportation:** The Project alignment extends along Winters Street, Dean Street, Patrol Road, Ascot Avenue, 20th Street, and Elkhorn Boulevard. With the exception of Elkhorn Boulevard, dedicated bicycle facilities are not available. Regional Transit access points along the Project alignment are limited to a bus line along Elkhorn Boulevard.

- **Tribal Cultural Resources:** There are no known tribal cultural resources associated with the Project alignment.

- **Utilities:** Electricity in the area is provided by SMUD, gas service is provided by PG&E, sewer service is provided by Sacramento County Water Agency.

4.5 Evaluation of the Project's Contribution to a Community's Sensitivity

As noted previously, the Project would involve replacing approximately 5.5 miles of an existing above-ground 12 kV cable with 69 kV and 12 kV cables. The Project's contributions to the community's sensitivity are as follows:

- **Aesthetics:** There would be temporary and minor modification of views along the Project alignment during construction activities due to presence of construction equipment, which is common in urban areas. Because the power line alignment would occur along the same route as under the existing conditions, there would not be a substantial change to the aesthetic quality and character of the Project alignment.

- **Air Quality:** Construction-related activities would result in Project-generated emissions of ROG, NO_X, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ from construction activities (e.g., digging holes for pole installation, pouring cement) off-road equipment, material delivery, and worker commute trips, as discussed in Section 3.3., Air Quality, criterion (a). The Project, without the application of BMPs, would generate daily and annual emissions of PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ in excess of the SMAQMD thresholds during construction activities (i.e., 0 lb/day). Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.3-1 would require incorporation of SMAQMD's BMPs during construction. As noted in Section 3.3, "Air Quality," SMAQMD allows for a non-zero threshold for projects that implement BMPs, and with implementation of BMPs, the Project would not exceed SMAQMD's non-zero threshold. As a result, emissions associated with the Project would not be considered substantial.

- **Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources:** The Project would not affect known cultural resources or tribal cultural resources. Mitigation measures identified in

Section 3.5, “Cultural Resources,” would be implemented to reduce potentially significant impacts related to accidental discovery of previously unknown cultural resources.

- **Energy**: The Project would not affect access to electricity because electrical service would be maintained throughout construction. Temporary use of grid-sourced energy and other fuel consumption would be associated with construction.

- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change Vulnerabilities:** The Project would not worsen the area’s flooding vulnerabilities because it would not affect the area’s topography or levee system.

- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** The use and handling of hazardous materials during construction would be conducted in a manner consistent with existing regulations. Mitigation Measure 3.9-1 requires that procedures outlined in the McClellan Business Park Soils Management Manual for Transfer Parcels would be followed and an encroachment permit from McClellan Park would be obtain, if necessary. These procedures would ensure that potential exposure of hazardous materials on construction workers and the public would not be substantial.

- **Noise:** Noise would be generated during construction, but it would be temporary, conducted in compliance with the City of Sacramento and County of Sacramento noise ordinances, and similar to other construction type noise that would occur within the surrounding area. No substantial increases in ambient noise levels at sensitive receptors in the area would occur.

- **Public Services:** The Project would not increase demand for public services or otherwise affect the provision of public services to the area.

- **Recreation:** The Project would not affect any parks or recreational opportunities.

- **Transportation:** During site preparation, auguring, and placement of poles, up to an entire lane may be used for staging. While roadway conditions would be restored to their pre- Project conditions, roadway, bicycle, transit access, and pedestrian throughfare may be temporarily affected during construction, thereby causing conflicts with circulation during construction. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.17-1 would require preparation and implementation of a traffic control plan that would maintain traffic safety and operations along the Project alignment.

- **Utilities:** The Project would not require municipal water, wastewater treatment, stormwater drainage, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities and therefore would not affect these facilities. Overall, the Project would improve consistency and necessary electrical capacity to the areas surrounding the Project alignment.

As described for each environmental resource area, the Project would not contribute to the community’s current sensitivity.

4.6 Summary of Environmental Justice Assessment

Per SMUD's Sustainable Communities Resource Priorities Map,[2] which reflects several data sets related to community attributes that SMUD uses to identify historically underserved communities, the Project alignment is located in areas designated as medium/high, medium, and medium/low sensitivity areas (SMUD 2024). This is due in part to the area's designation as the following:

- Opportunity Zone,
- Disadvantaged Community pursuant to SB 535,
- an area where 25 percent of the population have an income below the Federal poverty line, and
- an area within high and medium zones for social vulnerability to climate change.

However, the Project involves improvements to existing electricity infrastructure that provide electrical service to the Rio Linda community and McClellan Business Park. The Project does not have the potential to affect the community and/or worsen existing adverse environmental conditions. Therefore, ***no existing environmental justice conditions would be worsened*** as a result of the Project.

Although the Project would not worsen existing environmental justice conditions, as a leader in building healthy communities, one of SMUD's Sustainable Communities goals is to help bring environmental equity and economic vitality to all communities. By investing in underserved neighborhoods and working with community partners, SMUD is part of a larger regional mission to deliver energy, health, housing, transportation, education and economic development solutions to support sustainable communities. Sustainable Communities currently has two partnerships in the Project area:

- Sierra Nevada Journeys: With an investment from SMUD's Sustainable Communities, Sierra Nevada Journeys is conducting a community needs assessment in order to develop culturally relevant education materials. This information will be shared with SMUD/other local partners and will be used to develop curriculum that is pertinent to historically marginalized communities as well as inclusive of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. The new curriculum will be deployed through Sierra Nevada Journeys' Classroom Unleashed Program.
- The mission of Sierra Nevada Journeys is to deliver innovative outdoor, science-based education programs for youth to develop critical thinking skills and to inspire natural resource stewardship. More than 50 percent of the students they serve are from low-income families and 61 percent are students of color, working with Title 1 schools in the area. In addition, Sierra Nevada Journeys strong working relationships with local Tribes.
- Sacramento Native American Health Center(s): The Sacramento Native American Health Center Inc. (SNAHC) is a non-profit, Federally Qualified Health Center, located in

[2] The Sustainable Communities Resource Priorities Map is available at https://usage.smud.org/SustainableCommunities/?_ga=2.223364443.1927542179.1598288052-1197903775.1589235097.

Midtown Sacramento. The health center is committed to enhancing quality of life by providing a culturally competent, holistic, and patient-centered continuum of care. There are no tribal or ethnic requirements to receive care here.

- SNAHC is community-owned and operated; a Board of Directors governs the center. Since the grand opening the center staff has grown to meet the needs of the community, 26 percent are Native American from both local and out-of-state Tribes.

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5.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

SMUD

Ammon Rice ..... Environmental Services, Supervisor

Jerry Park ..... Environmental Management Specialist

Ascent

Chris Mundhenk ..... Principal

Marianne Lowenthal ..... Project Manager

Bryn Kirk ..... Environmental Planner

Saba Ashgary ..... Environmental Planner

Jazmin Amini ..... Noise Specialist

Julia Wilson ..... Senior Air Quality Specialist

Matthew Brehmer ..... Air Quality Specialist

Josh Boldt ..... Senior Biologist

Amy Nelson ..... Biologist

Pam Brillante ..... Wetland Biologist

Shannon Hickey ..... Wetland Biologist

Roberto Mora ..... Cultural Resources Specialist

Lisa Merry ..... GIS Specialist

Brian Perry ..... Graphics Specialist

Gayiety Lane ..... Document Specialist

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