potential significant impacts associated with the proposed Pala Substation project and incorporate mitigation measures into the project design as necessary to reduce or eliminate the significant or potentially significant effects of the project.

1.3 CONTENT AND FORMAT OF MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

This MND includes the following:

Section 1.0, Introduction: Provides an Introduction to the MND.

Section 2.0, Project Description: Provides a detailed description of the proposed project evaluated in this MND. This section also includes project purpose and need, location, site selection, project characteristics, construction, operation and maintenance and measures incorporated into the project to reduce environmental impacts.

Section 3.0, Proposed Finding of No Significant Effect: Provides finding that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment and rationale supporting this finding.

Sections 4.0 – 5.0, Initial Study/Environmental Discussion: Provides an analysis of environmental issues and concerns surrounding the project.

Section 6.0, Electric Magnetic Fields (EMF): Describes the CPUC's current policy regarding EMF exposure.

Sections 7.0 and 8.0, Report Preparation/References: Provides report preparation personnel and references.

Appendices to the MND:

- Appendix A Public Distribution List
- Appendix B SDG&E Subregional NCCP – Mitigation Measures
- Appendix C Cultural Resources

Technical Reports: Separate technical reports providing further project details and analysis include the following:

- Proponents Environmental Assessment (PEA) for the Pala Substation, SDG&E January 2001, amended March 29, 2001. This document is incorporated by reference and provides the basis for preparation of this MND and includes the following technical reports:

  – – *Biological Survey Reports* (Ecological Ventures California, Inc., July 2000 O'Farrel Biological Consulting, August 2000 and HDR Engineering, March 2001)
  – – *Geotechnical Investigation* (Geocon, September 2000)
  – – *Sound Level Analysis* (SDG&E, January 2001)
  – – *Cultural Resources Survey Report* (Affinis, August 2000)
  – – *Drainage Study* (Cherry Engineering, March 2001)

These technical studies are incorporated into this MND by reference and are available for review at the CPUC, Energy Division, Analysis Branch, 505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, California.

1.4 OTHER AGENCIES THAT MAY USE THE MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND INITIAL STUDY/ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

This MND is intended to be used by responsible and trustee agencies that may have review authority over the project. SDG&E will obtain all permits as required by law. Based on the analysis in *Sections 4* and *5* of this document, other permits/approval by responsible agencies with jurisdiction over the proposed project include consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) for impacts to endangered species pursuant to the U.S. Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act.

1.5 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

In accordance with CEQA, a good faith effort has been made during the preparation of this MND to contact affected agencies, organizations and persons who may have an interest in this project. The distribution list for the MND is provided in APPENDIX A.

The CPUC will also be providing a notice of availability to property owners within 300 feet of the project and will also be publishing this notice in the local newspaper, in accordance with the CPUC Rule 17.1 of the Rules of Practice and Procedures. This document is also being made available on CPUC's website at the following address: http://www/cpuc.ca.gov.

In reviewing the MND and Initial Study/Environmental Evaluation, affected public agencies and the interested public should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project are proposed to be avoided or mitigated.

Comments may be made on the MND either in writing before the end of the comment period or at the public hearing to be held by the CPUC on the MND. A 30-day review and comment period from May 29, 2001 to June 29, 2001 has been established, in accordance with §15105(b) of the CEQA guidelines. Following the close of the public comment period, the CPUC will consider this MND and comments thereto in determining whether to approve the proposed project. Written comments on the MND should be sent to the following address June 29, 2001, at 5:00 PM.

Beth Shipley
California Public Utilities Commission
c/o Dudek & Associates, Inc.
605 Third Street
Encinitas, CA 92024

SECTION 2.0
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PURPOSE AND NEED

The existing 9.4 megavolt ampere (MVA) Pala Substation is a 69/12-kV substation with two 12-kV circuits. The 1999 peak load for Pala Substation was 9.9 MVA. The forecast peak load for 2001 is 13.2 MVA, which includes 2 MVA for the Pala Casino and other area load growth. Because the existing 69/12-kV transformer is 43 years old and is rated at 9.4 MVA for normal operation and 11.1 MVA for planned load limit operation, the substation must be upgraded in order to avoid equipment damage and loss of service to customers. Additionally, the expansion cannot be accomplished within the footprint of the existing station and much of the equipment is too outdated to be mixed with upgraded equipment.

Since substation equipment is standardized, the substation is initially being upgraded/ expanded to one 69/12-kV, 28 MVA transformer, and two 12-kV distribution circuits with the potential to expand to two new circuits. The existing substation and its outdated equipment will be removed after the expansion is online. The single transformer configuration is expected to have adequate capacity for the next 5 to 15 years (SDG&E Supplement to Application, March 2001).

The forecast in load growth takes into account "normal annual growth" estimated for the substation as well as specific projects like the Pala Casino and the existing Rancho Viejo development (approved buildout of approximately 800 homes) located four miles west of the Pala Substation. Normal annual growth for Pala substation is 0.2 MVA and is due to the accumulation of small load additions estimated after review of the substation and circuit peak load data and customer service requests.

2.2 PROJECT LOCATION/SITE SELECTION

The project site is located on the north side of State Highway 76 (Pala Road), near the intersection of Pala del Norte Road, approximately four miles east of Interstate 15 in the unincorporated Pala/Pauma Subregional Planning area of northern San Diego County. The 12.7-acre project site is part of a larger 203.2-acre property owned by SDG&E that includes steep, undisturbed hillsides and agricultural lands. Lands adjoining the site are vacant. Across Pala Road to the east is the Hanson Sand and Gravel mining operation in the San Luis Rey River. There are no sensitive receptors (*e.g.*, residences, schools) within 1,900 feet of the

project site. *Figure 1* shows the regional location of the project, *Figure 2* shows the site location on the USGS Pala Quadrangle topographic map, and *Figure 3* provides an aerial view of the project site.

2.3 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The proposed project is planned to be a 56 MVA substation with the loop-in of the existing 69 kV transmission line (see *Figure 4*). The proposed substation at full buildout is planned to have two 28 MVA transformers, three 69 kV tie lines, and eight 12 kilovolt (kV) circuits. Area of temporary and permanent impacts are shown on *Table 1*. Major project components include development of the substation, loop-in of the existing transmission line and upgrades to the existing distribution.

TABLE 1
PROJECT COMPONENTS AND IMPACTS

	Permanent Impact	Temporary Impact	Habitat Type
Substation Pad Area	0.84 acre (36,590 square feet)	0	4,160 square feet of CSS. Remainder non-native grasses
Manufactured Slope	0	1.16 acres (50,530 square feet)	Approximately 35,496 square feet is non-native grasses. 16,034 square feet is comprised of CSS to be revegetated.
Asphalt Driveways	0.24 acre (10,454 square feet)	0	Non-native grassland
Laydown Area	0	0.26 acre (11,326 square feet)	Non-native grassland
Stockpile Area	0	0.24 acre (10,454 square feet)	Non-native grassland
New Poles (2)	8 square feet	72 square feet	Non-native grassland
Construction Area*	1,925 square feet**	0	1,315 square feet of CSS*** Remainder non-native grasses
Total	**1.12 acres (48,969 square feet)**	**1.66 acres (72,309 square feet)**	**0.13 acre (5,475 square feet) of permanent CSS disturbance**

* Used for maneuvering around slopes and finished pad areas.

** Assumes a 5-foot perimeter would be cleared and maintained around the pad.

*** Assumes an area of CSS totaling 263 linear feet at a width of 5 feet (1,315 square feet) would be permanently cleared along the south and west sides of the pad.

Figure 1 Regional Map

Figure 2 Vicinity Map

Figure 3 Aerial View of Project Site

Figure 4 Preliminary Project Site/Grading Plan

Substation

As shown in *Figure 4*, the proposed substation at full buildout is planned to have 56 MVA capacity with two 28 MVA transformers, three tie lines and eight 12 kV circuits. The existing 69 kV tie line will be routed in and out of the proposed site underground. Substation equipment will be low profile with a maximum height of approximately 13 feet. Access to the substation will be from Pala Road. A substation perimeter wall approximately 10 to 13 feet high will enclose the substation. *Figure 4* shows the preliminary site/grading plan. Landscaping will be installed with the initial development; and plants will be similar to the native and non-native plants, trees and bushes already in the area. The landscaping is shown on *Figure 5*.

Transmission and Distribution

An existing electric centerline right-of-way runs along the eastern property line. It is proposed to ~~intersect~~interset two 69 kV wood cable poles on the transmission line right-of-way to loop the existing 69 kV transmission line into the expanded substation. The existing 69 kV transmission line will be routed underground into the substation using two wood cable poles. The cable poles will be in addition to the existing wood poles on the east side of the substation. Underground routes to and from the new poles will be in the existing transmission corridor and substation.

The existing two 12 kV distribution circuits will be brought out underground to Pala Road and will transition to overhead and tie into the existing circuitry. The existing 12 kV circuitry will be reconductored and rearranged as necessary. Circuit ties will be constructed as needed.

2.4 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Site development will conform to the "Recommended Grading Specifications" (Geocon, 2000). The final grade of the site will be about one percent, for drainage towards the access road and Pala Road. The access drive to the station would also be rough graded at this time. Wall construction and underground 12 kV and 69 kV duct installation would then be performed on the substation property and in the transmission corridor. After ~~this phase is~~ construction has been completed, the landscape and irrigation would be installed.

Figure 5 Conceptual Landscape Plan

Following site development, actual construction of the substation equipment foundations will commence. ~~This is the only activity within the substation enclosure until it becomes operational.~~ Once the enclosure is completed, the major equipment is placed on their foundation and structures are anchored in their final position. The grounding grid installation follows and wiring the equipment controls and protection devices are performed concurrently. Removal of the existing substation would begin after facilities are installed so that uninterrupted electricity would be provided.

All construction equipment, vehicles, personnel and materials staging areas would be accommodated within the property lines of the proposed substation property. Construction equipment would include tractors, scrapers, loaders and a substantial number of trucks for excavating, compacting and grading the site. Portable cranes and heavy hauling trucks would be employed for the transformer. Concrete trucks, backhoes, crew trucks and pick-up trucks would be coming and going to the site during the installation of the foundations, ground grid and underground ducts. Crew trucks, boom trucks and pick-up trucks would be going to and from the site daily for the balance of the construction activities, testing and check out, final transmission tie-ins and 12 kV circuit cabling until the station is energized. *Table 2* provides an estimate of the number of vehicle types required during construction and the duration of use.

TABLE 2. ESTIMATED VEHICLE TYPES AND DURATION OF USE

Vehicle Type	Estimated Number Required	Duration (Days)
Tractor	1	22
Scraper/Grader	2	22
Loader	1	22
Compactor	1	22
Truck (25-ton dump)	250 truck trips for cut soil (average 25 trips per day)	10
Crane		3
	2 (to set pole and transformer)	2
Concrete trucks	70 truck trips (10 loads/day average)	15
Backhoe	1	45
Crew trucks	3	100
Boom truck	1	5
Pick-up truck	3	100
Personal vehicles	15	9 (months)

It is anticipated that six to eight workers would be employed for the site development phase of the project and eight to fifteen workers during the balance of construction of the transmission, substation and

distribution infrastructure until just prior to control wiring check-out and testing. At this stage of construction, approximately four to six electricians would be onsite. Final activities including final tie-ins and energizing the station would utilize about six to eight electricians and two to four engineers. Total construction time is expected to take nine months. The project's in-service date is anticipated to be March 2002.

2.5 FACILITY OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The substation will be unmanned, and electric equipment within the substation also will be controlled from SDG&E's central operations facility. The substation wall will be of sufficient height and texture to prevent unassisted and unauthorized entrance. Barbed wire will be attached to the inside of the block wall and will not be visible from outside the wall. The entrance gate will be locked and warning signage will be posted on the perimeter wall. Entry to an operational substation will be restricted to authorized SDG&E personnel. Maintenance will include equipment testing, equipment monitoring and repair, as well as emergency and routine procedures for service continuity and preventive maintenance. It is anticipated that maintenance would require about four trips per year with a two to four-person crew. One pick-up truck with one troubleman could visit the station once per day.

The substation will ordinarily not be lighted at night. If occasional servicing or maintenance is required at night, the area lighted will be within the screening wall.

2.6 MITIGATION MEASURES INCLUDED INTO THE PROJECT

The following identifies mitigation measures identified in this MND which SDG&E has incorporated into the project as well as those measures identified as part of the project in SDG&E's application for a Permit to Construct.

General

- Prior to substation site development, SDG&E will submit project construction and grading plans to the County of San Diego Department of Planning and Land Use, Building Inspection Division and Department of Public Works, Grading Division, for review and comment. The plan submittal will follow a typical building permit and grading permit submittal process, with the exception that SDG&E will not receive building, grading, electrical or plumbing permits from the County. SDG&E will incorporate the plan check comments into the project, where those comments do not conflict with, or compromise, the CPUC's General Orders regulating the location, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the substation.

Geotechnical

- Grading and construction standards based on the site-specific conditions identified in the Applicant's Geotechnical Report (*Geocon, September 2000*) will be incorporated into design and construction of the proposed facilities.

- Recommendations of the geotechnical investigation report regarding soils, grading, foundations, slope stability, lateral loads, pavements, and drainage facilities listed in the report shall be implemented by SDG&E and project grading and foundation plans will be submitted for geotechnical review prior to finalizing the plans and beginning construction of the project.

- The project design shall meet or exceed existing earthquake design standards, including the Uniform Building Code guidelines currently adopted by the County of San Diego. All proposed facilities shall be designed to meet CPUC's General Order for seismic standards.

- Grading for the substation shall follow best management practices for the control of erosion, such as sediment traps, straw bale or gravel bag carriers, silt fences, slope roughening, and outlet protection. Finished grades shall be promptly planted at the end of construction according to the project landscape plan. If necessary, temporary slope cover such as bonded fiber matrix or mulch shall be applied to newly graded slopes. Project plans shall show control of drainage from the completed site.

Water

- The project will implement short-term construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) and will employ the protective erosion control measures described in the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) General Permit for Discharges associated with construction activities (Permit No. CA 0108758). These measures designed to control short-term construction sedimentation and erosion include, but are not limited to, sandbags, matting, mulch, berms, hay bales, or similar devices along all graded areas to minimize sediment transport.

- Project plans submitted to the County will include a plan for drainage identifying the manner in which storm flows will be accommodated. SDG&E will ensure that construction of improvements are in place to accommodate runoff generated onsite under developed conditions, and to control runoff downstream.

- At the driveway to the site off the private access road from Pala Road, a double 24-inch reinforced concrete pipe culvert shall be installed to conduct upstream flows under the driveway and discharge through an energy dissipater, preserving the basic drainage pattern of the upstream area. Runoff from the developed site shall be directed to a catch basin with underground pipes discharging into the existing drainage channel west of Pala Road, where runoff from the site now discharges by sheet flow.

- During operation, landscaping and drainage facilities shall be maintained on a regular and as-needed basis.

Air Quality

- SDG&E will comply with the San Diego Air Pollution Control District (APCD) rules and regulations to reduce fugitive dust emissions, including implementing the following:

  – – All unpaved construction areas will be sprinkled with water or other acceptable San Diego APCD dust-control agents during dust-generating activities to reduce dust emissions. Additional watering or acceptable APCD dust-control agents will be applied during dry weather or windy days until dust emissions are not visible.

  – – Trucks hauling dirt and debris will be covered to reduce windblown dust and spills.

– – On dry days, dirt or debris spilled onto paved surfaces will be swept up immediately to reduce resuspension of particulate matter caused by vehicle movement. Approach routes to construction sites will be cleaned daily of construction-related dirt in dry weather.

– – Onsite stockpiles of excavated material will be covered or watered.

Biological Resources

General:

- The following Operational Protocols are required by the SDG&E Subregional Natural Community Conservation Plan (SDG&E 1995) and would apply to all construction of the proposed project. These measures are environmentally sensitive construction techniques that reduce impacts to biological resources and prevent environmental degradation during construction. These measures include, but are not limited to, the following types of measures:

  – – An environmental training of the sensitive resources onsite shall be given to all construction personnel
  – – No harming of wildlife including rattlesnakes
  – – No pets on the right-of-way
  – – No collection of plants or wildlife
  – – Construction activities, including staging areas will be limited to within flagged boundaries
  – – Minimize erosion with Best Management Practices
  – – Avoid impacts to wetlands
  – – Control fugitive dust
  – – Prior to clearing of vegetation, a biological survey will be conducted to determine that there are no active nests, burrows or dens, etc.

  Refer to Section 7.1, Operational Protocols in the SDG&E Subregional NCCP (SDG&E 1995), provided in *Appendix B* to the MND.

Sensitive Habitats

- Permanent impacts to 0.13 acre of sensitive coastal sage scrub and 0.99 acre of non-native grassland habitat from the substation site, access road, and landscaping shall be mitigated by deducting mitigation credits from the SDG&E mitigation bank. A 1:1 mitigation ratio is applied to impacts occurring outside the "Preserve" associated with the applicable planning area (*i.e.*, MSCP for the County of San Diego unincorporated areas). A ratio of 2:1 is applied to all permanent impacts occurring inside the "Preserve." Although the County has not yet designated a preserve area or ranked habitat quality on a regional scale, the project site is not anticipated to be part of a regional preserve due to its disturbed nature. Therefore, a 1:1 mitigation ratio shall be applied for permanent impacts resulting from project implementation. A total of 1.12 acres will be deducted from the SDG&E Mitigation Credits (see *Appendix B* to the MND).

- Temporary impacts to 1.66 acres of coastal sage scrub and non-native grassland will be mitigated by habitat enhancement measures as described in the SDG&E Subregional NCCP. Habitat restoration activities shall occur under the direction of a qualified Habitat Restoration Specialist. As stated in the NCCP, all disturbed areas, whether inside or outside of preserves and which do not need to be periodically cleared for maintenance activities, shall be restored. A native coastal sage scrub seed mix will be used to reseed the areas disturbed from construction. Seed mix specifications and hand-application techniques shall be provided by the Habitat Restoration Specialist. Restoration, maintenance and monitoring measures shall follow as provided in the SDG&E NCCP and shall be documented in a native habitat restoration plan and associated plans and specifications. This plan shall be reviewed and approved by the USFWS and CDFG for approval (see *Appendix B* to the MND).

Sensitive Plants

- A native habitat restoration plan shall be prepared according to guidelines set forth in the SDG&E NCCP. This plan shall include planting specifications for native coastal sage scrub/chaparral species (see *Appendix B* to the MND).

Sensitive Wildlife Species

- Impacts to potentially-occurring coastal California gnatcatchers will be mitigated through the implementation of the Operational Protocols in Section 7.1 of the Subregional NCCP and the Habitat Enhancement Measures in Section 7.2 of the NCCP for scrub and chaparral species (see *Appendix B* to the MND). The NCCP mitigates impacts to sensitive species on a habitat basis. Therefore, temporary impacts will be mitigated through site remediation. Permanent impacts will be mitigated at a 1:1 ratio. An environmental survey according to SDG&E's NCCP will be conducted prior to construction due to the potential for the species to occur onsite and to determine which protocols will be implemented.

- Laydown areas used during construction shall avoid sensitive coastal sage scrub habitat.

- An exclusion fence shall be installed no more than 24 hours prior to construction to preclude arroyo toads from entering the work area. The exclusion fence shall be maintained throughout the duration of the project construction. Arroyo toad surveys shall be conducted before construction begins each day by a project biologist with a Section 10(a) (1) (B) permit for handling arroyo toad. If arroyo toads are found in the exclusion fence, the toad(s) shall be removed and relocated by the permitted biologist in coordination with the USFWS.

- Should construction occur during the breeding season for the least Bell's vireo (15 March through 15 September), a protocol-level survey for least Bell's vireo nesting in adjacent riparian habitat (unnamed tributary to the west of the project site) shall be conducted prior to construction. If a nest is located, a temporary noise barrier shall be used during construction in coordination with CDFG and USFWS. The noise barrier shall attenuate noise levels at 60 dB(A). If protocol-level surveys indicate that adjacent riparian habitat is not occupied by least Bell's vireo, this measure will not be required.

- Because of the potential presence of two or more listed endangered species on or adjacent to the site, a biologist monitor shall be onsite during construction activities to ensure that all biological mitigation measures are being implemented.

Hazards

- The project will comply with State Title 22 and federal Title 40 requirements, including the oil spill control and countermeasure plan (SCCP) required by Title 40 CFR Section 112.7.

- SDG&E shall conduct regular maintenance for suppression of fire hazards at the proposed substation in accordance with Public Utilities Commission mandates. SDG&E shall maintain a 30-foot wide firebreak around substation with clearing for fire control to be completed on a yearly basis. All construction methods will be conducted in accordance with OSHA standards.

- All transport, handling, use, and disposal of substances such as petroleum products, solvents, and paints related to construction, operation, and maintenance of the substation shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws regulating the management and use of hazardous materials.

- Sampling of all excavated soils and soils imported will be conducted to ensure that soil is free of contamination. Should excavated soil be contaminated, it will be disposed of in compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations.

Aesthetics

- All equipment in the substation shall be low-profile, a maximum of 12 to 13 feet high.

- The substation perimeter wall will be 10 to 13 feet high designed to screen transformers, distribution circuits, and other facility improvements from view. The wall will be of buff colored textured concrete block. Two gates of redwood will be in the northern wall facing travelers south on Pala Road (SR-76). The design of the substation wall will be submitted to the Pala/Pauma sponsor group and County of San Diego Department of Planning and Land Use for review and comment.

- The periphery of the project shall be landscaped and screened in a naturalistic manner. The landscape plan shall be submitted to the Pala/Pauma sponsor group for review and comment and shall utilize native plants and shrubs. Additionally, landscaping will not include species that are invasive to wetland habitats and herbicides will not be used.

- Substation lighting will be used during emergencies only.

Traffic

- A traffic control plan will be prepared in accordance with the County of San Diego and Caltrans traffic control guidelines *(Manual of Traffic Controls for Construction and Maintenance Work Zones)* to address short-term construction traffic and in particular to address heavy equipment/truck access to the site.

- All work within Caltrans right-of-way such as tie into existing drainage will require an encroachment permit.

- The existing unimproved driveway connection to State Route 76 (SR-76) will be improved to Caltrans standards as prescribed in the *Highway Design Manual Section 205*. The driveway will be paved out to the existing SR-76 main lanes.

Noise

- All construction activities will comply with the County of San Diego's allowable construction limits of 7AM to 7PM Monday through Saturday and prohibits construction on Sundays and holidays.

SECTION 3.0
PROPOSED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT

The CPUC finds that the project will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment based on the results of the Initial Study/Environmental Checklist (see *Section 4*) and the Environmental Evaluation Discussion (see *Section 5*). Some potentially significant effects have been identified and mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project to ensure that these effects remain at less than significant levels (see *Section 2.6*). An MND is therefore proposed to satisfy the requirements of CEQA (PRC 210000 et.seq. 14 Cal. Code Regs 15000 et.seq.). This conclusion is supported by the following:

1. **Aesthetics:** The substation has been designed to include a 10 to 13-foot high wall and landscaping to screen views to travelers along Pala Road (SR-76). There are no other sensitive or public views of the project site. Design and landscaping measures incorporated into the project in consultation with the Pala/Pauma sponsor group will effectively reduce project long-term visual quality impacts to less than significant. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* and *Section 5.1, Aesthetics,* for further discussion.

2. **Agricultural Resources:** The project site is not located on prime or unique/important farmland and no agricultural products are produced on the site. Therefore, the project would not affect agricultural resources. See *Section 5.2, Agricultural Resources,* for further discussion.

3. **Air Quality:** Project operation will not generate air emissions. Construction emissions would not exceed identified significance thresholds and are therefore considered to be less than significant. Furthermore, measures are incorporated into the project which reduce short-term construction effects associated with generation of particulate matter less than 10 microns (PM10) as required by the San Diego APCD. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* as well as *Section 5.5, Air Quality,* for further discussion.

4. **Biological Resources:** The proposed project would permanently impact approximately 1.12 acres including approximately 0.13 acre of coastal sage scrub and the remainder non-native annual grassland. No host plant species for the quino checkerspot butterfly were detected onsite. Focused surveys for the Stephens' kangaroo rat were negative on or adjacent to the site.

   The vegetation on and adjoining the site is of moderate habitat value, with a potential for California gnatcatcher and arroyo toad, two federally-listed species. Additionally, least Bell's vireo is known to breed on the San Luis Rey River, east of the project site, and southern willow scrub was found in a small drainage west of the site. The project could therefore (directly or indirectly) affect habitat for the federally and state-listed endangered least Bell's vireo, federally-threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, and the federally-listed endangered arroyo toad.

Mitigation to reduce impacts to coastal sage scrub and sensitive species which generally breed and forage in coastal sage scrub will be in accordance with SDG&E's approved Section 10(a) permit and NCCP and USFWS and CDFG requirements. In addition to complying with the requirements of SDG&E's NCCP, measures such as avoidance of the breeding season and/or incorporation of noise mitigation are included to mitigate potential indirect impacts to the least Bell's vireo. Additionally, an exclusion fence to keep arroyo toads from entering the construction area will be installed and a biological monitor will be present during construction. Implementation of these measures in consultation with the USFWS will reduce impacts to biological resources to less than significant. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* as well as *Section 5.4, Biological Resources,* for further discussion.

5. **Cultural Resources:** There is no potential for encountering important archaeological resources as a result of project construction. A literature review from the south Coastal Information Center, the San Diego Museum of Man, and a field survey of the proposed impact area determined that no archaeological resources were found on the proposed substation site and therefore no impacts to archaeological resources would occur. See *Section 5.14, Cultural Resources,* for further discussion.

6. **Geology and Soils:** No geologic hazards would occur with project implementation. Measures have been incorporated into the project design to reduce risks associated with geologic hazards to below a level of significance. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* as well as *Section 5.6, Geology and Soils,* for further discussion.

7. **Hazards:** The proposed project is not anticipated to generate hazardous materials; therefore, no significant impacts due to public hazards would occur. Measures have been incorporated into the project construction phase to ensure that potential exposure to hazardous materials associated with removal of the existing substation will be reduced to less than significant. Additionally, regular maintenance for suppression of fire hazards will be implemented. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* and *Section 5.7, Hazards,* for further discussion.

8. **Hydrology and Water Quality:** Measures are incorporated into the project which reduce project effects associated with potential discharge of sediments and runoff to less than significant. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* as well as *Section 5.8, Water*, for further discussion.

9. **Land Use:** The project would be developed on a 203-acre site owned by SDG&E that currently has a substation on it. The project would impact approximately 2.8 acres and would expand the existing substation by approximately one acre. Lands adjoining the site are vacant and there are no sensitive receptors (*e.g.*, residences or schools) within 1,900 feet of the project site. Because the existing substation is a utility use already established, the proposed expansion of the existing substation is not considered a new land use being newly introduced and therefore is not considered to conflict with the County's land use planning goals and objectives, and/or existing and planned land uses in the project area. Furthermore, environmental parameters defining land use compatibility are physical factors such as traffic, noise, air quality, aesthetics and public safety. Each of these issues are addressed in *Section 5* of this document. The environmental analysis in *Section 5* of this document indicates that the potential traffic, noise, air quality, aesthetics and public safety impacts of the proposed project will be less than significant. Such physical factors serve as indicators of land use compatibility. The analyses in *Section 5*, along with the fact that the site currently contains a substation and therefore would not introduce a new land use, support the conclusion that no significant impacts to land use would occur as a result of project implementation. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included into the Project to Reduce Environmental Impacts,* as well as *Section 5.9, Land Use and Planning,* for further discussion.

10. **Mineral Resources:** The proposed project would not require long-term natural resource use. See *Section 5.10, Mineral Resources,* for further discussion of environmental impacts.

11. **Noise:** Impacts resulting from both construction and operation noise were determined to be less than significant as they would comply with the County of San Diego's Noise Ordinance. See *Section 5.11, Noise,* for further discussion.

12. **Population and Housing:** The proposed project would not generate additional population, therefore, the approval of the project would have a less than significant effect on human population and housing. See discussion under *Section 5.12, Population and Housing,* for further discussion.

13. **Public Services:** The proposed project would not generate a demand for public services; therefore, no impact to public services would occur. See *Section 5.13, Public Services,* for further discussion.

14. **Recreation:** There are no parks or other public recreational facilities on the project site. Therefore, the project would not affect recreational opportunities. See *Section 5.14, Recreation,* for further discussion.

15. **Transportation and Circulation:** During operation, the proposed project is expected to generate approximately one to two vehicle trips per day. This limited number of vehicle trips would result in less than significant impacts to traffic or traffic congestion.

    During construction, testing and energizing the station (approximately nine months), traffic will be generated by construction crews and equipment/material deliveries. A traffic control plan will be prepared to accommodate short-term construction traffic during the construction of the site. The configuration of Pala road (SR-76) provides adequate sight distance in the vicinity of the proposed substation and, in combination with standard construction traffic control, would not cause any undue or extraordinary safety impacts. Travelers on Pala Road may experience some delays during the period of construction. It is expected that this short-term construction-related traffic would not create a substantial impact on traffic volumes nor change traffic patterns in such a way that congestion and delay would be substantially increased on street segments or at intersections. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* as well as *Section 5.15, Transportation and Circulation,* for further discussion.

16. **Utilities and Service Systems:** No impacts to utilities and service systems would occur. See

Section 2.6, Mitigated Measures Included Into the Project, as well as *Section 5.16, Utilities and Service Systems,* for further discussion.

17. **Cumulative Impacts:** As revealed by the previous discussions for each environmental category, impacts from the proposed project are considered to be less than significant or no impact. Measures are incorporated into the project which reduce impacts associated with geological resources, hydrology and water quality, air quality, traffic, biological resources, hazards, noise, and visual resources impacts to less than significant (see *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project).* No long-term significant impacts are associated with the project. In the absence of significant impacts, incremental accumulation of significant effects would not occur.

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