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CHAPTER 4 – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 AESTHETICS

| Would the Project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-Than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|--|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4.1.0 Introduction

Visual or aesthetic resources are generally defined as both the natural and built features of the landscape that can be seen and that contribute to the public's experience and appreciation of the environment. Visual resource or aesthetic impacts are generally defined in terms of a project's physical characteristics, potential visibility, and the extent to which its presence would alter the perceived visual character and quality of the environment. The San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) South Bay Substation Relocation Project (Proposed Project) proposes the removal of an existing substation and the installation of a new substation on a nearby site in an urban landscape setting that currently includes existing industrial development. With the implementation of the applicant-proposed measures (APMs), it is anticipated that the visual impacts from the Proposed Project would be less than significant.

4.1.1 Methodology

The analysis of potential visual effects associated with the Proposed Project is based on a review of technical data, including maps and drawings of the Proposed Project, aerial and ground-level photographs of the Proposed Project area, local planning documents, and computer-generated visual simulations that show the Proposed Project's appearance.

The study addresses the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines for visual impact analysis. Central to this assessment is an evaluation of representative public views from which the Proposed Project would be visible. To document the visual changes that would occur,

visual simulations depict the Proposed Project from three representative public viewpoints. Two simulations portray the appearance of the new substation, whereas the third simulation portrays the removal of the existing substation facility. The visual simulations are presented as before-and-after images. The visual impact assessment was based on an evaluation of the changes to the existing visual resources that would result from construction and operation of the Proposed Project.

4.1.2 Existing Conditions

This section includes a description of the visual setting and regulatory framework. Existing visual conditions are characterized in terms of the physical landscape features that comprise visual resources in the Proposed Project area.

Regulatory Background

Because the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has exclusive jurisdiction over the siting, design, and construction of the Proposed Project, the Proposed Project is not subject to local discretionary land-use regulations. The following analysis of local regulations relating to visual resources is provided for informational purposes. As outlined in the following sections, the construction and operation of the Proposed Project would not conflict with any environmental plans, policies, or regulations adopted by agencies with jurisdiction over local aesthetic regulations.

City of Chula Vista General Plan

The City of Chula Vista General Plan contains several policy elements, including Land Use and Transportation, Economic Development, Housing, and Environmental. Scenic resources are addressed in the City of Chula Vista General Plan Land Use and Transportation Element, which is discussed as follows.

- Objective LUT 10.5: Require undergrounding of utilities on private property and develop a priority-based program of utility undergrounding along public right-of-ways (ROW).

The Proposed Project involves reconfiguring existing above-ground utilities within a transmission line ROW. Improvements at the proposed Bay Boulevard Substation site would include the loop-in of the 230 kilovolt (kV) line into the proposed Bay Boulevard Substation, the relocation of 69 kV facilities, and the extension of the 138 kV transmission lines. All three transmission line components involve undergrounding. As part of the 230 kV loop-in, the 230 kV line would be undergrounded for approximately 1,000 feet, and as part of the 69 kV relocation, approximately 4,100 feet of line would be undergrounded. The 138 kV extension would involve the connection of three transmission lines via a 3,800-foot-long underground duct bank. Because the Proposed Project involves the undergrounding of utilities that are currently overhead, it would therefore be consistent with this policy.

- Objective LUT 11: Ensure that buildings and related site improvements for public and private development are well-designed and compatible with surrounding properties and districts.

The area surrounding the proposed Bay Boulevard Substation site currently supports similar industrial and commercial uses. Further, the site was formerly developed with a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facility. Therefore, construction of the new substation on the site would not represent a use that is visually inconsistent with the existing setting.

Bayfront Specific Plan/Chula Vista Local Coastal Program

The Bayfront Specific Plan is the City of Chula Vista's approved Local Coastal Program. The Bayfront Specific Plan was approved by the City in 1992 and certified by the California Coastal Commission in 1993. The Bayfront Specific Plan is contained within and implemented through the City of Chula Vista Municipal Code. The policies and objectives identified in the Bayfront Specific Plan are indentified to guide the development of land use, infrastructure, and water resources for the Chula Vista Bayfront area.

- Objective VW.1: Plan and develop the Bayfront to ensure provision of important views to, from, and within the project area.

Presently, views across the proposed Bay Boulevard Substation site from Interstate 5 (I-5) and Bay Boulevard are limited due to intervening topography and existing trees and vegetation. Similar facilities, which include the South Bay Power Plant (SBPP) and the existing South Bay Substation, are located to the north/northwest of the Proposed Project site, with other light industrial and commercial uses located in the surrounding area. In addition, although the site is adjacent to San Diego Bay, the portion of the bay immediately west of the Proposed Project site supports the Western Salt Works commercial salt crystallizer ponds, which do not allow public access. Therefore, due to the surrounding land uses and characteristics of the site and the surrounding area, no scenic vistas or important views across the site exist. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be consistent with this policy.

- Policy VW.1.A: Focuses on preserving and establishing views from the freeway and major entryways; roadways within the site; perimeters of the Bayfront outward; and high-rise development vistas. This policy confines high-rise within the Mid-Bayfront area, or the area proposed as the Sweetwater District.

As previously stated, views across the site to the San Diego Bay are limited due to topography and intervening vegetation, and no scenic vistas or important views across the site exist. The Proposed Project would not result in high-rise development. As such, the Proposed Project would be consistent with this policy.

Designated Roadways

California Department of Transportation: Scenic Highway Program

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the Legislature in 1963. Its purpose is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The State Scenic Highway System includes highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been designated as such. The status of a state scenic highway changes from eligible to officially designated when the local jurisdiction adopts a scenic corridor protection program, applies to the California Department of

Transportation for scenic highway approval, and receives the designation. A city or county may propose adding routes with outstanding scenic elements to the list of eligible highways; however, state legislation is required for them to become designated.

There are no designated state scenic highways adjacent to the Proposed Project area. State Route (SR) 75 along Silver Strand Boulevard, located at its nearest point 1.7 miles across San Diego Bay from the Proposed Project, is an officially designated state scenic highway. Figure 4.1-1: Project Landscape Context and Photograph Viewpoint Locations displays the location of SR 75 relative to the Proposed Project. Distant views of the Proposed Project would be available from this officially designated state scenic highway; however, the Proposed Project would be barely noticeable given the distance and when seen in the context of nearby industrial development, including the adjacent SBPP and storage tanks. A view from SR 75 is included in Figure 4.1-2: Photographs from Across San Diego Bay.

Scenic Highways Element of the San Diego County General Plan (1986)

The purpose of the San Diego County General Plan Scenic Highway Element is to establish a Scenic Highway Program to protect and enhance the county's scenic, historic, and recreational resources within a network of scenic highway corridors. The Scenic Highway Element recommends establishing design guidelines for scenic corridors. The element contains a map of scenic highways and by-ways and a priority list. The map indicates those routes for which scenic highway corridors, official designation, and protection measures are to be established. The priority list describes each route within the Scenic Highway System and designates the route's priority for which scenic corridor planning and implementation are to be initiated.

The nearest county designated scenic route is located over seven miles away. The Proposed Project does not lie within the viewshed of any county designated scenic highways.

Land Use and Transportation Element of the City of Chula Vista General Plan

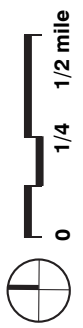
As part of the Land Use and Transportation Element, several designated scenic roadways have been identified by the City. The City has defined Scenic Roadways as those where views of unique natural features and roadway characteristics, including enhanced landscaping, adjoining natural slopes, or special design features, make traveling a pleasant visual experience. One Scenic Roadway—Marina Parkway from the intersection of E Street and I-5 on the north to its intersection with I-5 at J Street—is located approximately 250 feet north of the northernmost boundary of the Proposed Project, as shown in Figure 4.1-1: Project Landscape Context and Photograph Viewpoint Locations.

Regional and Local Landscape Setting

Figure 4.1-1: Project Landscape Context and Photograph Viewpoint Locations depicts the Proposed Project's regional landscape context. Located in southwestern San Diego County, the Proposed Project area is situated on a broad marine terrace that includes the City of San Diego and surrounding communities. Mountain peaks to the east rise to over 3,500 feet, including nearby San Miguel Mountain at 3,565 feet.



- ← ● A Photo Viewpoint
- ← (1) Simulation Viewpoint
- Scenic Route



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Figure 4.1-1
Project Landscape Context and Photograph Viewpoint Locations
 SDG&E South Bay Substation Relocation Project



A. View from Bayside Park near Silver Strand Boulevard/SR 75 pullout looking northeast



B. View from Grand Caribe Shore Park looking southeast

Note: For viewpoint locations refer to Figure 4.1-1

The Proposed Project site is located in the City of Chula Vista on the eastern edge of the San Diego Bay. It is located in the Otay District of the Chula Vista Bayfront, an area primarily occupied by various industrial facilities, including the existing South Bay Substation, the SBPP, a former LNG site, and SDG&E-owned transmission lines. Immediately east of the Proposed Project area is Bay Boulevard, a two-lane arterial road, fronted by low-rise commercial/office buildings. I-5 and the City of Chula Vista's urban core lie further east. From Bay Boulevard, intermittent views of the San Diego Bay can be seen between existing vegetation and industrial structures. To the south and west lie broad, flat salt crystallizer ponds. Approximately two miles across the San Diego Bay to the west of the Chula Vista Bayfront is the community of Coronado Cays, located on the peninsula that encloses the bay.

Project Viewshed

The Proposed Project viewshed is defined as the general area from which the Proposed Project would be visible. Within this area, the existing South Bay Substation, the SBPP, several tanks, and existing overhead transmission lines are established landscape features. The following section describes the visual setting and identifies locations from which the Proposed Project may be visible to the public, including roadways, public open space, and nearby commercial developments.

For reference, it may be noted that visual details generally become apparent to the viewer when they are seen in the foreground, at distances of 0.25 to 0.5 mile or less (Smardon 1986). For the purpose of the Proposed Project visual analysis, the primary focus considered this foreground viewshed area, where visual details are apparent, and up to approximately one mile from the Proposed Project area, where change could be potentially noticeable.

The following provides a description of the visual character found within the Proposed Project area.

Potentially Affected Public Views

From the east, public views of the site generally occur from vantage points along Bay Boulevard and I-5. The site is most visible to motorists traveling along Bay Boulevard; however, except in the immediate vicinity, views of the site are generally limited by intervening vegetation and trees. This condition is depicted in the existing conditions photographs in Figure 4.1-3: Visual Simulation – Viewpoint 1 and Figure 4.1-4: Visual Simulation – Viewpoint 2. I-5 lies approximately 800 feet east of the site. Although the site can be seen from a limited portion of I-5, visibility is diminished by distance as well as by intervening vegetation and buildings. The most close-range view of the proposed Bay Boulevard Substation site occurs from the parking lot of an office building across Bay Boulevard; however, because the building has few west-facing windows, site visibility is limited. Intervening vegetation and trees further limit views from this area.

Views of the Bay Boulevard Substation site are restricted from the north due to both limited public access and intervening development. However, the existing substation is visible from places located within the Chula Vista Marina area, including Marina Parkway and Marina View Park.

From the west, distant site views are available from the Silver Strand Boulevard and a bike trail that runs along the peninsula that encloses the San Diego Bay. A scenic vista pullout is located along this roadway, approximately 1.7 miles from the Proposed Project site. As shown in Photograph A, a view from a location near this pullout, built structures visible along the eastern bayshore are the SBPP, storage tanks, and the Goodrich Aerostructure factory, which are depicted in Figure 4.1-2: Photographs from Across San Diego Bay. The existing substation is barely discernable from this location. The view is backdropped by mountains, including San Miguel Mountain, and even the most prominent structure—the SBPP—does not obscure this topographical feature. Photograph B from Grand Caribe Shoreline Park to the southwest of the site shows a view across the San Diego Bay from the Coronado Cays area, which is depicted in Figure 4.1-2: Photographs from Across San Diego Bay. Similar to Photograph A, distant mountains backdrop the view, while built structures appear silhouetted on the far shoreline. The most prominent built structure is the SBPP, and the existing substation is barely discernable in the view. San Miguel Mountain is out of this view to the far left.

Visual Character of the Project Site

As shown in Figure 4.1-1: Project Landscape Context and Photograph Viewpoint Locations, the Bay Boulevard Substation site is an undeveloped, approximately 33-acre property located between the San Diego Bay and Bay Boulevard in the City of Chula Vista. The footprint of the Bay Boulevard Substation would occupy approximately 10 acres within a 12.42-acre parcel to be acquired by SDG&E. The site's appearance is disturbed due to its previous uses related to the former LNG plant and SBPP, located north of the site. Concrete foundations of former LNG storage tanks and other equipment are currently visible. Approximately 9.5 acres of the 33-acre property are presently within a SDG&E utility corridor containing several aboveground transmission lines.

The immediate landscape of the Proposed Project area is characterized by relatively flat topography interspersed with constructed earth berms that enclosed the former LNG storage tanks. Elevations in the Proposed Project area range from approximately 10 feet to 23 feet above mean sea level, with the higher elevations at the top of the containment berms. Lower areas include containment basins that were constructed for the LNG facility.

In general, this area is highly disturbed as a result of previous and existing industrial land uses. Vegetation in the area is predominately non-native with grasslands and scattered groups of shrubs and trees.

Traversing the area is an existing SDG&E ROW with several overhead transmission and distribution lines. Many of these overhead lines would connect to the new Bay Boulevard Substation.

4.1.3 Impacts

Significance Criteria

To determine the significance of the anticipated visual changes, the Proposed Project's effects were evaluated in light of the direction provided by the CEQA Guidelines. Appendix G of the

Guidelines indicates that a project may have a significant effect on the visual environment if it would:

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

Factors considered in applying these criteria to determine significance include the extent of project visibility from residential areas and designated scenic routes; the degree to which the various project elements would contrast with or be integrated into the existing landscape; and the extent of change in the landscape's composition and character. Project conformance with public policies regarding visual quality was also taken into account, as previously discussed.

Computer-generated visual simulations were used to evaluate the visual impacts of the Proposed Project.

Physical Characteristics of the Proposed Project

The Proposed Project would involve the construction of a new substation in a highly disturbed, sparsely vegetated area, a 230 kV loop-in, the relocation of six 69 kV transmission lines, and the extension of a 138 kV transmission line. The Proposed Project would also include the demolition of the existing South Bay Substation situated approximately 1,800 feet north of the proposed Bay Boulevard Substation site. Chapter 3 – Project Description provides a detailed description of the Proposed Project, including drawings of the substation configuration.

The Bay Boulevard Substation would lie on an approximately 10-acre graded pad enclosed by an approximately 10-foot-tall masonry wall, within a 12.42-acre parcel. Two 30-foot-wide paved access roads, one approximately 630 feet in length and one approximately 350 feet in length, would connect east to Bay Boulevard where a new entry gate would be located. The substation equipment and structures would be neutral gray in color with a non-reflective finish.

Improvements at the proposed Bay Boulevard Substation site would include the loop-in of the 230 kV line into the proposed Bay Boulevard Substation, the relocation of 69 kV facilities, and the extension of the 138 kV lines. All three transmission line components involve undergrounding. As part of the 230 kV loop-in, the 230 kV line would be undergrounded for approximately 1,000 feet, and as part of the 69 kV relocation, approximately 4,100 feet of line would be undergrounded. The 138 kV extension would involve the connection of three transmission lines via a 3,800-foot-long underground duct bank.

To connect the substation to the adjacent existing transmission lines, five new tubular steel cable riser poles, approximately 85 feet tall, would be installed. In addition, one 12 kV wood

distribution pole and 23 69 kV wood tangent poles would be removed. The 69 kV poles would be approximately 60 to 70 feet in height. In addition, six approximately 25-foot-tall stub poles for guying would be removed. The tallest structure to be constructed as part of the Proposed Project would be the approximately 165-foot-tall 138 kV steel cable riser pole. Additional details of the power line interconnection and distribution lines are described in Chapter 3 – Project Description.

Visual Change

The Proposed Project would introduce a new substation in a low-lying area at the edge of the San Diego Bay. In this general location, large-scale transmission structures and other industrial structures are established landscape features. To varying degrees, the Proposed Project components would be visible to the public from a limited area. The following discussion is an evaluation of the visual changes associated with the Proposed Project as seen from the following three key representative public vantage points, which are depicted in Figure 4.1-1: Project Landscape Context and Photograph Viewpoint Locations:

- Bay Boulevard at the entrance gate, looking west, as shown in Figure 4.1-3: Visual Simulation – Viewpoint 1
- Bay Boulevard north of Palomar Street, looking northwest, as shown in Figure 4.1-4: Visual Simulation – Viewpoint 2
- SBPP, looking west from the L Street overpass, as shown in Figure 4.1-5: Visual Simulation – Viewpoint 3

Two simulations—Figure 4.1-3: Visual Simulation – Viewpoint 1 and Figure 4.1-4: Visual Simulation – Viewpoint 2—illustrate visual change associated with the proposed Bay Boulevard Substation. In addition, Figure 4.1-5: Visual Simulation – Viewpoint 3 shows the visual effect of removing the existing South Bay Substation, which is located on a separate site, approximately 1,800 feet to the north of the proposed substation.

Figure 4.1-3: Visual Simulation – Viewpoint 1 shows a before-and-after-view of the Proposed Project site from Bay Boulevard near the proposed southern entry drive to the new substation. In the existing view, transmission structures including a lattice tower, a tubular steel pole, and several wood poles are prominent. In the foreground, the San Diego and Arizona Eastern railroad tracks run parallel to the roadway. In the background, the San Diego Bay is visible, though partially screened by scattered groupings of shrubs. The visual simulation shows the entry road to the substation surrounded by an approximately 10-foot-tall concrete masonry wall. Several new steel poles are also visible. The simulation also shows the removal of existing wood poles. A comparison of the existing view and the simulation indicates that the new substation facility would obstruct the limited view toward the bay that is currently available. The simulation also demonstrates that the height of new transmission facilities would be lower than the existing structures seen in this location.



Existing Condition (View from Bay Boulevard at the proposed entrance gate, looking west)



Visual Simulation of the air-insulated substation at the proposed Bay Boulevard Substation site (View from Bay Boulevard at the proposed entrance gate, looking west)

Note: For viewpoint location, refer to Figure 4.1-1: Project Landscape Context and Photograph Viewpoint Locations.



Existing Condition (View from Bay Boulevard north of Palomar Street, looking southwest)



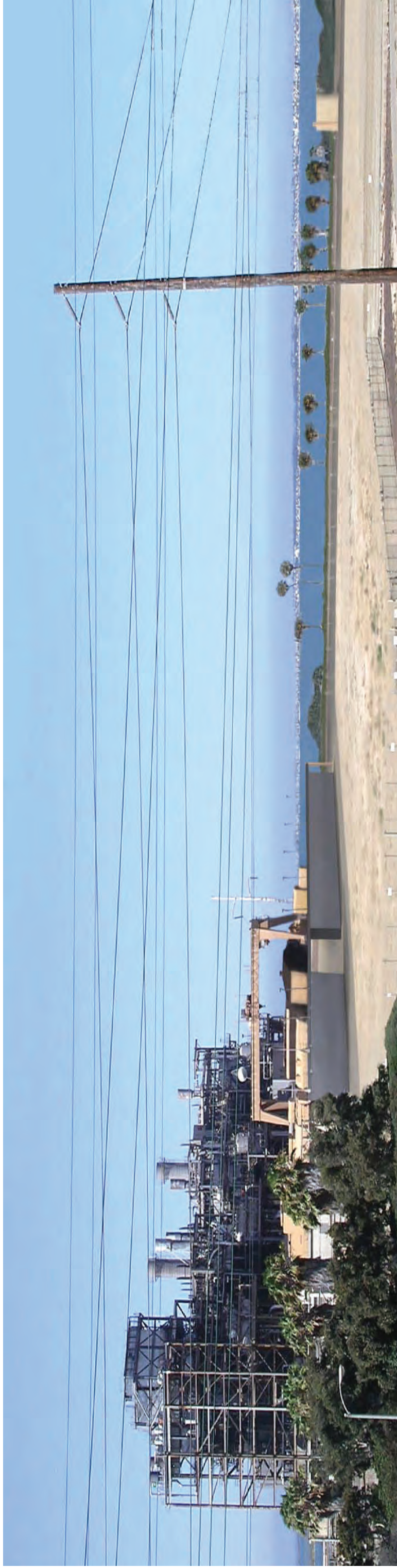
Visual Simulation of the air-insulated substation at the proposed Bay Boulevard Substation site (View from Bay Boulevard north of Palomar Street, looking southwest)

SDGE SOUTH BAY RENDERINGS REV 6 04/19/10 FILENAME:VIEW_B_05.jpg

Note: For viewpoint location, refer to Figure 4.1-1: Project Landscape Context and Photograph Viewpoint Locations.



Existing Condition (View of the existing South Bay Substation and South Bay Power Plant, looking west from the L Street overpass)



Visual Simulation of the demolished South Bay Substation (View of the South Bay Power Plant, looking west from the L Street overpass)

Note: For viewpoint location, refer to Figure 4.1-1: Project Landscape Context and Photograph Viewpoint Locations.

Figure 4.1-4: Visual Simulation – Viewpoint 2 depicts a before-and-after view of the Proposed Project site from a location along Bay Boulevard further north of the Figure 4.1-3: Visual Simulation – Viewpoint 1 viewpoint. The existing view encompasses the site with transmission structures, including a steel pole and two wood poles. The railroad track appears in the foreground with a concrete masonry wall behind. Beyond this, shrubby vegetation located on a berm situated east of the Proposed Project site screens views toward the bay. The simulation shows the new substation and portions of the perimeter fencing behind the middleground vegetation. The existing wood utility poles have been removed. The simulation also portrays several new steel poles, including one that would appear prominent in this Bay Boulevard view.

Figure 4.1-5: Visual Simulation – Viewpoint 3 depicts a before-and-after view of the existing South Bay Substation as seen from the L Street overpass. The existing view shows the substation in the foreground alongside the SBPP. Lattice towers and a wood pole are also visible. Between the various industrial structures, filtered views are available toward the San Diego Bay and the western shore of the bay. The simulation image shows the removal of the substation site and related transmission structures. The simulation demonstrates that the proposed removal of the existing substation facility would result in creating unobstructed views of the San Diego Bay from this vantage point. This change represents a positive effect on the existing visual character.

The introduction of the proposed Bay Boulevard Substation on a currently vacant, disturbed site would alter the visual appearance of the property. The appearance of the Proposed Project would be consistent with the surrounding area's visual character, which includes existing industrial development such as the SBPP and South Bay Substation, as depicted in Figure 4.1-5: Visual Simulation – Viewpoint 3. The proposed demolition of the existing South Bay Substation would eliminate elements of visual clutter near the existing SBPP and result in an unobstructed view of the San Diego Bay. This change is considered to be a beneficial effect.

Conceptual Landscape Plan

Landscaping is included as part of the Proposed Project. Figure 4.1-6: Preliminary Landscape Concept presents the conceptual landscape plan for the Bay Boulevard Substation site. As shown in this figure, informal clusters of shrubs and trees would be installed outside of the eastern wall of the proposed substation and along the entry driveway in order to provide screening. Figure 4.1-6: Preliminary Landscape Concept includes a list of suggested plant species and their respective sizes and growth rates. APM-AES-01 in Section 4.1.4 Applicant-Proposed Measures includes an additional description of the project landscape concept.

Lighting

Substation lighting would be provided by approximately fifteen 175-watt tungsten-quartz lamps placed near major electrical equipment and approximately four 75-watt lights around the control house. Because maintenance activities are not anticipated to occur at night, this lighting would remain turned off except on specific occasions when needed. One 100-watt yellow floodlight, mounted near each substation gate, would remain on during nighttime hours for safety. All on-site lighting would be oriented downward to minimize glare onto surrounding property and habitat.

Question 4.1a – Scenic Vista Effects – *No Impact*

The CEQA requires that the Proposed Project be evaluated as to whether its implementation has a substantial, adverse effect on a scenic vista. For purposes of this evaluation, a scenic vista is defined as a distant public view along or through an opening or corridor that is recognized and valued for its scenic quality. Based on this definition, the pullout on Silver Strand Boulevard across the San Diego Bay from the Proposed Project site is a scenic vista that could be affected by the Proposed Project. However, the vista is approximately 1.7 miles away, and existing large-scale industrial elements along the shoreline, such as the nearby SBPP and associated facilities, are minor elements in the overall view from this location. Because the Proposed Project would be smaller in scale and lower in height than these existing built features, it would represent a minor incremental visual change. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not have a substantial effect on a scenic vista.

Question 4.1b – Scenic Resource Damage within a State Scenic Highway – *No Impact*

SR 75 along Silver Strand Boulevard, the closest designated State Scenic Highway, is located approximately 1.7 miles to the west of the Proposed Project site. As shown in Photographs A and B on Figure 4.1-2: Photographs from Across San Diego Bay, due to the distance, the Proposed Project would barely be noticeable from the highway and would not obstruct views of mountain backdrop. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not substantially damage scenic resources within a State Scenic Highway.

The City of Chula Vista General plan designates Marina Parkway north of the existing substation as a scenic roadway. Although the southern edge of Marina Parkway west of I-5 is extensively landscaped with shrubs and mature trees, views from the roadway currently include glimpses of industrial facilities such as the existing South Bay Substation, the SBPP, and transmission structures. However, the Proposed Project involves removing the existing substation, thus improving views from this scenic roadway and resulting in a beneficial impact.

Question 4.1c – Visual Character Degradation

Construction – Less-than-Significant Impact

Construction-related visual impacts would result from the presence of equipment, materials, and work crews along the route and at the substation and transition area. Views of the site would generally occur from vantage points along Bay Boulevard and I-5. Although the visual effects from construction activities would be relatively short-term, lasting an estimated 32 months, they would be most noticeable to motorists traveling along Bay Boulevard, within the vicinity of the Proposed Project site. However, views of the site are diminished by existing vegetation and trees. Similarly, views to the site from I-5 would be diminished by distance to the site, as well as intervening vegetation. The most visible view of the new Bay Boulevard Substation site occurs from the parking lot of an office building across Bay Boulevard; however, the building has limited west-facing windows that allow for views of the site, and intervening vegetation and trees further reduce such views. Substation-related construction effects would be less noticeable to the public because construction would occur within an area that presently supports industrial uses and would be distanced from other uses across Bay Boulevard and I-5. Therefore, impacts to visual resources as the result of construction would be considered to be less than significant.

LANDSCAPE CONCEPT:

The preliminary landscape concept includes informal tree and shrub groupings located outside of the perimeter wall west of the substation. Small trees would also line the entry drive. The suggested plant palette includes all drought-tolerant species and some California natives. Proposed landscaping would partially screen the substation site and new utility poles from Bay Boulevard and locations further east. The planting would also partially screen views from the office park to the south.

NOTES:

1. The final landscape layout would be determined in consultation with the City of Chula Vista and in conjunction with survey and final engineering design data.
2. For a minimum two-year period while new plant material becomes established, regular watering would be provided using irrigation with a reclaimed/non-potable water source or truck-watering.
3. Owner would provide periodic landscape maintenance including removal and replacement of dead plant material.
4. Plant material proposed for installation below existing/future overhead conductors and easements would be low growing to allow for clearance. All planting would be consistent with SDG&E's operational requirements for landscaping in proximity to electric transmission facilities.

PRELIMINARY CONCEPT
 Subject to change based on
 additional information and
 final engineering design.

PLANT PALETTE LEGEND

| SYMBOL | TYPE OF PLANT | APPROXIMATE QUANTITY | SUGGESTED SPECIES | CONTAINER SIZE | MAXIMUM HEIGHT/SPREAD |
|--------|----------------------------------|----------------------|---|----------------|---|
| | Entry drive tree | 14 | <i>Eriobotrya deflexa</i> (Bronze Loquat) <i>Geijera parvifolia</i> (Australian Willow) | 15 Gallon | 25'/25' 35'/25' |
| | Small, broad leaf evergreen tree | 15 | <i>Heteromeles arbutifolia</i> (Toyon) <i>Rhamnus alaternus</i> (Coffeeberry) | 15 Gallon | 25'/25' 25'/15' |
| | Calif. native shrub mixture | 22 | <i>Ceanothus "Julia Phelps"</i> (California Lilac) <i>Erigeron fasciculatum</i> (California Buckwheat) <i>Rhus integrifolia</i> (Lemonade Berry) <i>Artemesia californica</i> (California Sagebrush) | 10 Gallon | 4'-7'/equal ** 3' /4' ** 3'-10'/equal ** 5' /6' ** |

* Size estimates based on information contained in:
 Reimer, Jeffrey L. and W. Mark. "SelectTree: A Tree Selection Guide." <http://selecttree.calpoly.edu/>
 Artemesia californica

** Brenzel, Kathleen N., editor. 2001. Sunset Western Garden Book.

ENVIRONMENTAL VISION

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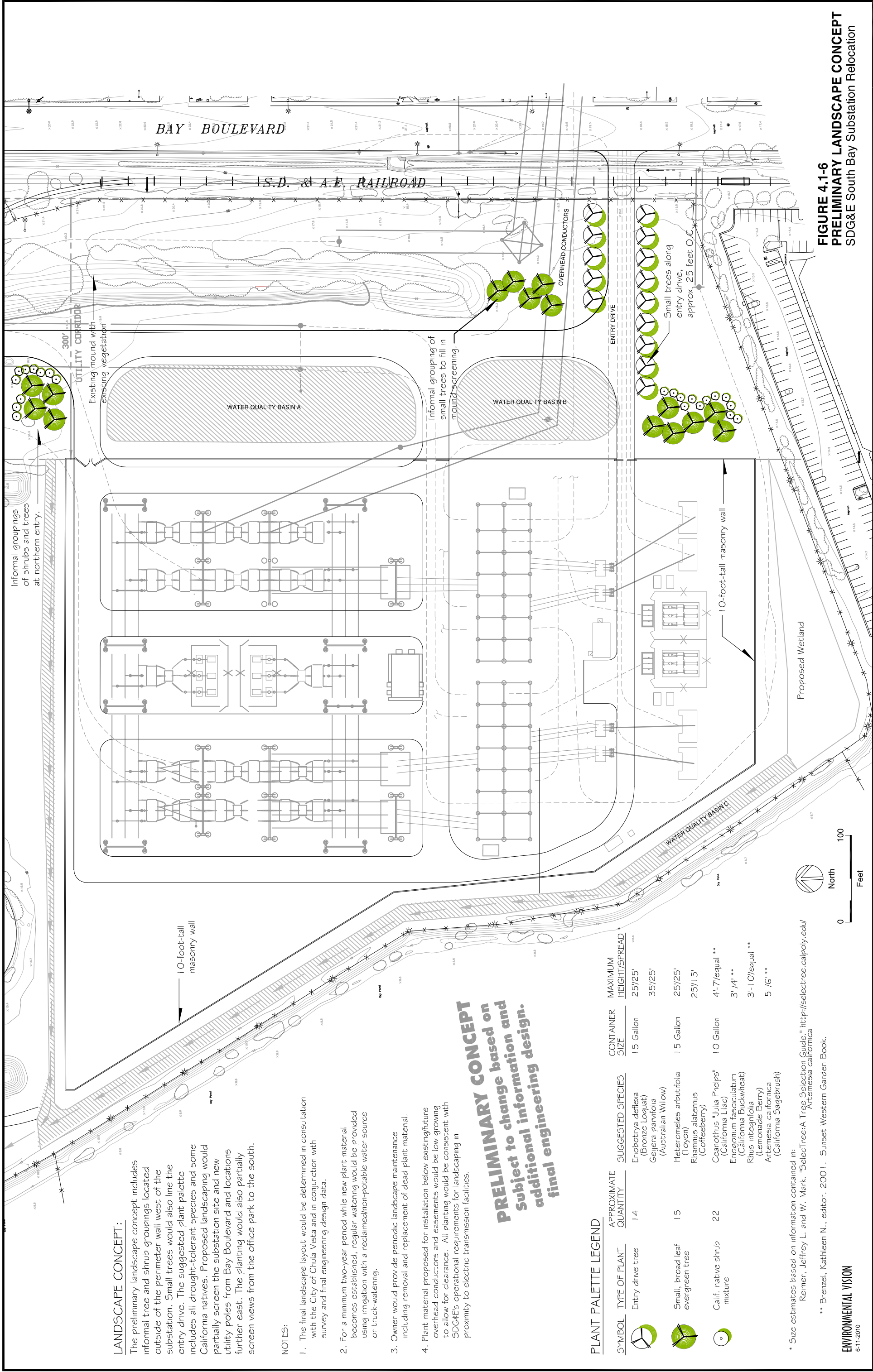


FIGURE 4.1-6
PRELIMINARY LANDSCAPE CONCEPT
 SDG&E South Bay Substation Relocation

Operation and Maintenance – Less-than-Significant Impact

As shown in visual simulation Figure 4.1-3: Visual Simulation – Viewpoint 1 and Figure 4.1-4: Visual Simulation – Viewpoint 2, to varying degrees, the proposed Bay Boulevard Substation would result in a noticeable visual change as viewed from limited locations along Bay Boulevard adjacent to the site. However, the proposed Bay Boulevard Substation is consistent with the industrial character of the area, which includes the SBPP, tanks, and an existing substation, and would not be seen from sensitive viewing locations, such as residential or recreation areas, or from designated scenic routes. The Proposed Project incorporates landscaping, as described in APM-AES-01, which would partially screen views of the new facility and help integrate its appearance with the bayshore setting. In addition, the color of the wall surrounding the Bay Boulevard Substation would be chosen to blend with existing site features (i.e., a dull grey, light brown, or dull green), as described in APM-AES-02. As demonstrated by the visual simulation shown in Figure 4.1-5: Visual Simulation – Viewpoint 3, the removal of the existing substation would open up views toward the bay and result in improving the area’s visual character. This particular improvement would be somewhat visible from Marina Parkway, a City of Chula Vista designated scenic roadway.

As part of the Proposed Project, the new transmission lines would be installed within an existing SDG&E utility corridor and existing overhead transmission lines would be undergrounded, as previously discussed. However, approximately five 85-foot-tall steel cable riser poles would be installed as part of the 69 kV relocation activities, which may be more prominent than the existing structures.

When viewed in the context of adjacent industrial development along Bay Boulevard, the overall scale and appearance of the Proposed Project are compatible with the character of the existing visual environment. Given the aesthetic character of the setting and the improvement of some views resulting from the removal of the existing South Bay Substation, the visual effects associated with the Proposed Project would be less than significant.

Question 4.1d – New Light or Glare

Construction – Less-than-Significant Impact

Construction of the Bay Boulevard Substation would not create nor necessitate the addition of substantial new lighting. Some construction of the Bay Boulevard Substation may take place at night and would therefore require lighting. There are no sensitive residential viewers in close proximity to the substation site; however, Bay Boulevard and I-5 motorists could briefly see the construction lighting. Although limited construction may be required during nighttime hours, all such lighting would occur in conformance with applicable City of Chula Vista lighting ordinances and regulations. In addition, all such lighting would be temporary and shielded to avoid spillover onto adjacent properties. Because this impact is temporary in nature and the affected views would be brief in duration, these visual effects would be considered less than significant.

Operation and Maintenance – Less-than-Significant Impact

No permanent lighting is planned for the new transmission line components. At the Bay Boulevard Substation, outdoor lighting would be restricted to the installation of a floodlight at

the entry gate, mounted on a pole measuring approximately eight feet tall. Other substation lighting located within the substation itself would be used during emergencies only. In addition, non-specular conductors would be used to reduce potential light and glare impacts. The new galvanized steel poles installed as part of the Proposed Project would weather and become duller over time, thus reducing their potential reflectivity. Because of these aspects of Proposed Project design, the Proposed Project would not result in a substantial new source of light or glare. Therefore, it is anticipated that the Bay Boulevard Substation would not result in significant impacts due to creation of a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. As a result, impacts would be less than significant.

4.1.4 Applicant-Proposed Measures

Implementation of the following APMs would minimize potential visual effects to a less-than-significant level:

- APM AES-01: Figure 4.1-6: Preliminary Landscape Concept presents a conceptual landscape mitigation plan for the Bay Boulevard Substation that would be implemented as part of the Proposed Project. The conceptual landscape plan would provide partial screening of views of the substation site and new utility poles from Bay Boulevard and locations further east. The landscaping would also partially screen views from the office park to the south. Landscaping includes informal tree and shrub groupings outside of the wall, east of the substation. Small native trees would also be used to extend plantings at the southern end of the mound to the east of the facility. Small trees would also line the entry drive.

Figure 4.1-6: Preliminary Landscape Concept includes a list of recommended plant species. All suggested trees appear on the City of San Diego Street Tree Selection Guide. Plants listed in Chapter 12.32 of the City of Chula Vista Municipal Code as prohibited species are excluded. Drought-tolerant plants, including California native species, are suggested. Proposed Project landscaping would receive regular watering during the initial two years following installation in order to ensure the establishment of the plants. As noted on Figure 4.1-6: Preliminary Landscape Concept, landscaping under transmission lines would consist of smaller trees and/or shrubs to allow for overhead clearance. All planting would be consistent with SDG&E operational requirements for landscaping in proximity to electric transmission facilities.

- APM AES-02: The color of the substation perimeter wall would be chosen to blend with the existing site features (i.e., a dull grey, light brown, or dull green) and minimize visual contrast with the bayfront landscape setting.

4.1.5 References

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