

CHAPTER 5

Comparison of Alternatives

This section summarizes and compares the environmental advantages and disadvantages of the Proposed Project and the alternatives evaluated in this EIR. This comparison is based on the assessment of environmental impacts of the Proposed Project and each alternative, as identified in Sections 4.1 through 4.16. Chapter 2 introduces and describes the Proposed Project. Chapter 3 introduces and describes the alternatives considered in this EIR.

Section 5.1 describes the methodology used for comparing alternatives. Section 5.2 summarizes the environmental impacts of the Proposed Project and the alternatives. Section 5.3 defines the Environmentally Superior Alternative, based on comparison of each alternative with the Proposed Project. Section 5.4 presents a comparison of the No Project Alternative with the alternative that is determined in Section 5.3 to be environmentally superior.

5.1 Comparison Methodology

CEQA does not provide specific direction regarding the methodology of alternatives comparison. Each project must be evaluated for the issues and impacts that are most important; this will vary depending on the project type and the environmental setting. Issue areas that are generally given more weight in comparing alternatives are those with long-term impacts (e.g., visual impacts and permanent loss of habitat or land use conflicts). Impacts associated with construction (i.e., temporary or short-term) or those that are easily mitigable to less than significant levels are generally considered to be less important.

This comparison is designed to satisfy the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[d], Evaluation of Alternatives, which states that:

“The EIR shall include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the proposed project. A matrix displaying the major characteristics and significant environmental effects of each alternative may be used to summarize the comparison. If an alternative would cause one or more significant effects in addition to those that would be caused by the project as proposed, the significant effects of the alternative shall be discussed, but in less detail than the significant effects of the proposed project as proposed.”

If the Environmentally Superior Alternative is the No Project Alternative, CEQA requires identification of an Environmentally Superior Alternative among the other alternatives (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[e][2]).

The following methodology was used to compare alternatives in this EIR:

- Step 1: Identification of Alternatives.** An alternatives screening process (described in Chapter 3) was used to identify approximately 12 alternatives to the Proposed Project. That screening process identified five alternatives for detailed EIR analysis. Each of the alternatives consists of alignment variations. A No Project Alternative was also identified. No other feasible alternatives meeting the basic project objectives were identified that would lessen or alleviate significant impacts.
- Step 2: Determination of Environmental Impacts.** The environmental impacts of the Proposed Project and alternatives are identified in Sections 4.1 through 4.16, including the potential impacts of construction and operation.
- Step 3: Comparison of Proposed Project with Alternatives.** The environmental impacts of the Proposed Project were compared to those of each alternative to determine the Environmentally Superior Alternative. The Environmentally Superior Alternative was then compared to the No Project Alternative.

Although this comparison focuses on the 16 issue areas (described in Sections 4.1 through 4.16), determining an Environmentally Superior Alternative is difficult because of the many factors that must be balanced. Although this EIR identifies an Environmentally Superior Alternative, it is possible that the Commission could choose to balance the importance of each impact area differently and reach a different conclusion.

5.2 Evaluation of Project Alternatives

Five alternatives in addition to the No Project Alternative were identified for evaluation in this EIR. This section compares the potential environmental impacts for the Proposed Project and five alternatives. A detailed analysis of environmental impacts and mitigation for all project alternatives is provided in Sections 4.1 through 4.16. The following discussion is organized based on level of impacts as defined by CEQA, first by significant unmitigable (Class I) impacts, and secondly less than significant with mitigation (Class II) and less than significant with no mitigation required (Class III) impacts.

There would be significant unmitigable (Class I) impacts on air quality resources during construction under the Proposed Project and each alternative (Table 5-1).

In addition to significant unmitigable impacts described above, there are several differentiating impacts that with mitigation would be less than significant. It should be noted that Alternatives 2, 3, 6, and 7 are compared to each other and to the Farrell-Garnet subtransmission line portion of the Proposed Project, and Alternative 5 is compared to the Mirage-Santa Rosa subtransmission line portion of the Proposed Project. Table 5-2 provides a comparison of potential impacts by alternative for each resource category.

**TABLE 5-1
SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT UNMITIGABLE (CLASS I) ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE
DEVERS-MIRAGE 115 KV SUBTRANSMISSION SYSTEM SPLIT PROJECT AND ALTERNATIVES**

Alternative	Significant (Class I) Impacts
Proposed Project	The Proposed Project would result in temporary significant unmitigable impacts to regional and local air quality during construction activities.
Class I Impacts Eliminated or Created by Alternatives	
Alternative 2	Same significant unmitigable impacts to air quality during construction. Impacts may be slightly more adverse due to trenching requirements for the approximately three-mile long underground segment.
Alternative 3	Same significant unmitigable impacts to air quality during construction. Impacts may be slightly more adverse due to trenching requirements for the approximately 3.6-mile long underground segment.
Alternative 5	Same significant unmitigable impacts to air quality during construction. Impacts may be slightly more adverse due to trenching requirements for the approximately three-mile long underground segment.
Alternative 6	Same significant unmitigable impacts to air quality during construction. Impacts may be slightly more adverse due to trenching requirements for the approximately one-mile long underground segment.
Alternative 7	Same significant unmitigable impacts to air quality during construction. Impacts may be slightly more adverse due to greater length of subtransmission line construction required under this alternative.

5.3 Environmentally Superior Alternative

As discussed in the previous section, the Proposed Project and all five alternatives would have significant unmitigable impacts on air quality during construction. The extent of the unmitigable impacts on air quality varies slightly by alternative but could not be mitigated to less than significant levels for the Proposed Project or any alternative. Consequently, the selection of an environmentally superior alternative is based on differences in intensity and type of impacts that would be less than significant with mitigation (Table 5-2). Based on these differences the identified environmentally superior alternative for the Farrell-Garnett study area is Alternative 3 and the identified environmentally superior alternative for the Mirage-Santa Rosa study area is Alternative 5.

All five alternatives studied in this EIR were variations of alignments that would use existing ROW. The alternatives studied would substitute one component of the Proposed Project (i.e., Alternatives 2, 3, 6, or 7 would be used in lieu of the proposed Farrell-Garnett 115 kV subtransmission line and Alternative 5 would be used in lieu of the proposed Mirage-Santa Rosa 115 kV subtransmission line). For a number of resources, there are no material environmental impact differences between the Proposed Project and alternatives including: agricultural resources; air quality; geology and soils; hazards and hazardous materials; hydrology and water quality; land use, planning, and policies; mineral resources, noise; population and housing; public services; recreation; and utilities and service systems.

**TABLE 5-2
DEVERS-MIRAGE 115kV SUBTRANSMISSION SYSTEM SPLIT PROJECT VS. ALTERNATIVES
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONCLUSIONS**

Resource Area	Proposed Project	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 5	Alternative 6	Alternative 7
Aesthetics	<p>Impacts determined to be Class II and Class III. The Farrell-Garnet line would include 1.5 miles of overhead line and the Mirage-Santa Rosa line would include 5.8 miles of overhead line.</p> <p>The proposed Mirage-Santa Rosa line would have more of an impact on aesthetics than Alternative 5.</p>	<p>Impact levels would be similar to the Proposed Project. However, Alternative 2 would result in 2.8 miles less overhead line than the proposed Farrell-Garnet line.</p>	<p>Impact levels would be similar to the Proposed Project. However, Alternative 3 would result in 2.9 miles less overhead line than the proposed Farrell-Garnet line.</p> <p>Least impact on aesthetics for the Farrell-Garnet study area.</p>	<p>Impact levels associated with the riser pole would be similar to the Proposed Project. However, Alternative 5 would be constructed underground with the exception of the I-10/UPRR crossing.</p> <p>Less of an impact on aesthetics than the proposed Mirage-Santa Rosa line.</p>	<p>Impact levels would be similar to the Proposed Project. However, Alternative 6 would result in 2.6 miles less overhead line than the proposed Farrell-Garnet line.</p>	<p>Impact levels would be similar to the Proposed Project. However, Alternative 7 would result in 3.3 miles more of overhead line than the proposed Farrell-Garnet line.</p> <p>Most impact on aesthetics for the Farrell-Garnet study area.</p>
Agriculture Resources	<p>Impacts determined to be Class III.</p> <p>No Preference</p>	<p>Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No Preference</p>	<p>Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No Preference</p>	<p>Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No Preference</p>	<p>Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No Preference</p>	<p>Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No Preference</p>
Air Quality	<p>Would result in temporary significant unmitigable air quality impacts during construction.</p> <p>Operational impacts would be Class III and GHG impacts would be Class II.</p> <p>No Preference</p>	<p>Impacts would be similar to Proposed Project; however, construction emissions would be slightly higher due to trenching required for the underground segment.</p> <p>No Preference</p>	<p>Impacts would be similar to Proposed Project; however, construction emissions would be slightly higher due to trenching required for the underground segment.</p> <p>No Preference</p>	<p>Impacts would be similar to Proposed Project; however, construction emissions would be higher due to trenching required for the underground segment.</p> <p>No Preference</p>	<p>Impacts would be similar to Proposed Project.</p> <p>No Preference</p>	<p>Impacts would be similar to Proposed Project; however construction emissions would be slightly higher due to the greater length of the line.</p> <p>No Preference</p>

TABLE 5-2 (Continued)
DEVERS-MIRAGE 115kV SUBTRANSMISSION SYSTEM SPLIT PROJECT VS. ALTERNATIVES
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONCLUSIONS

Resource Area	Proposed Project	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 5	Alternative 6	Alternative 7
Biological Resources	<p>Impacts determined to be Class II and Class III.</p> <p>Most impacts to biological resources for the Farrell-Garnet and Mirage-Santa Rosa study areas.</p>	<p>Impacts would be less adverse than the Proposed Project given that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although the overall length of the alternative would be 0.2 mile longer than the Proposed Project, it would include 2.8 miles less overhead line and associated operational impacts; and The alternative crosses through lower quality habitat for the same special status species. 	<p>Impacts would be less adverse than the Proposed Project given that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although the overall length of the alternative would be 0.7 mile longer than the Proposed Project, it would include 2.9 miles less overhead line and associated operational impacts; The line would traverse through primarily urban and disturbed areas that lack suitable habitat for most special status species; and The alternative crosses through lower quality habitat for the same special status species. <p>Least impacts on biological resources for the Farrell-Garnet study area.</p>	<p>Impacts would be less adverse than the Proposed Project given that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With almost no overhead lines, operational impacts from this alternative would be less adverse than the Proposed Project; and The line would traverse through paved streets bordered by ornamental trees that provide poor quality habitat for most special status species. <p>Less impacts on biological resources than the proposed Mirage-Santa Rosa line.</p>	<p>Impacts would be less adverse than the Proposed Project given that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overall length of the alternative would be 1.6 miles shorter than the Proposed Project; and 2.6 miles less overhead line and associated operational impacts; The line would not introduce any new above ground power lines where they don't already exist so operational impacts would be less adverse; The alternative crosses through lower quality habitat for the same special status species. 	<p>Impacts would be less adverse than the Proposed Project given that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The line would not introduce any new above ground power lines where they don't already exist so operational impacts would be less adverse; The alternative crosses through lower quality habitat for the same special status species.

TABLE 5-2 (Continued)
DEVERS-MIRAGE 115kV SUBTRANSMISSION SYSTEM SPLIT PROJECT VS. ALTERNATIVES
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONCLUSIONS

Resource Area	Proposed Project	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 5	Alternative 6	Alternative 7
Cultural Resources	Impacts determined to be Class II and Class III. Most impacts to cultural resources for the Farrell-Garnet and Mirage-Santa Rosa study areas.	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project.	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project.	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. However, Alternative 5 would avoid CA-RIV-785, 33-15429, and 33-15430. Less impacts on cultural resources than the proposed Mirage-Santa Rosa line.	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however, Alternative 6 would not impact Garnett Hill or the high sensitivity Imperial Formation. Alternative 6 would involve one mile of underground line work, but would be 4.2 miles long (i.e., less pole drilling).	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however, Alternative 7 would not impact Garnett Hill or the high sensitivity Imperial Formation and would involve no underground line construction, but would be approximately 9.1 miles long. Least impacts on cultural resources for the Farrell-Garnet study area.
Geology and Soils	Impacts determined to be Class III. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however risk of excessive settlement and/or erosion would be slightly higher due to trenching required for the underground segment. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however risk of excessive settlement and/or erosion would be slightly higher due to trenching required for the underground segment. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however risk of excessive settlement and/or erosion would be slightly higher due to trenching required for the underground segment. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however risk of excessive settlement and/or erosion would be slightly higher due to trenching required for the underground segment. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Impacts determined to be Class II and Class III. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however, Alternative 2 would be located closer to existing schools and would have a greater risk of impacting an evacuation route due to trenching requirements for the underground segment. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however, Alternative 3 would be located closer to existing schools and would have a greater risk of impacting an evacuation route due to trenching requirements for the underground segment. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however, Alternative 5 would have a greater risk of impacting an evacuation route due to trenching requirements for the underground segment. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however, Alternative 6 would have a greater risk of impacting an evacuation route due to trenching requirements for the underground segment. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however, Alternative 7 would be located closer to existing schools. No Preference

TABLE 5-2 (Continued)
DEVERS-MIRAGE 115kV SUBTRANSMISSION SYSTEM SPLIT PROJECT VS. ALTERNATIVES
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONCLUSIONS

Resource Area	Proposed Project	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 5	Alternative 6	Alternative 7
Hydrology and Water Quality	Impacts determined to be Class II and Class III. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however, soil disturbance during trenching for the underground segment would result in slightly higher impacts to water quality. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however soil disturbance during trenching for the underground segment would result in slightly higher impacts to water quality. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however, soil disturbance during trenching for the underground segment would result in slightly higher impacts to water quality. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however, soil disturbance during trenching for the underground segment would result in slightly higher impacts to water quality. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however, the greater amount of pole replacement would result in slightly higher impacts to water quality. No Preference
Land Use, Planning, and Policies	Impacts determined to be Class II and Class III. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference
Mineral Resources	No impacts were identified. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference
Noise	Impacts determined to be Class II and Class III. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however, underground portions would have greater noise and vibration impacts from construction, though less impacts from corona noise. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however, underground portions would have greater noise and vibration impacts from construction, though less impacts from corona noise. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however, the presence of a greater number of residences in proximity to this alternative could result in greater temporary impacts from construction activities. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however, underground portions would have greater noise and vibration impacts from construction, though less impacts from corona noise. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however, the alternative's proximity to a greater number of residential receptors would result in greater exposure to ambient corona noise. No Preference
Population and Housing	No impacts were identified. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference

TABLE 5-2 (Continued)
DEVERS-MIRAGE 115kV SUBTRANSMISSION SYSTEM SPLIT PROJECT VS. ALTERNATIVES
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONCLUSIONS

Resource Area	Proposed Project	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 5	Alternative 6	Alternative 7
Public Services	Impacts determined to be Class II and Class III. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however additional lane closure required for the underground portion could lead to slightly higher impacts to emergency response times. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however additional lane closure required for the underground portion could lead to slightly higher impacts to emergency response times. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however additional lane closure required for the underground portion could lead to slightly higher impacts to emergency response times. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project; however additional lane closure required for the underground portion could lead to slightly higher impacts to emergency response times. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference
Recreation	Impacts determined to be Class III. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference
Transportation and Traffic	Impacts determined to be Class II and Class III. Least impacts to traffic and transportation for the Farrell-Garnet and Mirage-Santa Rosa study areas.	Impact levels would be similar to the Proposed Project; however additional roadway closures and roadway damage that would result from trenching activities along the 3.0-mile underground segment would lead to higher temporary impacts during construction activities.	Impact levels would be similar to the Proposed Project; however additional roadway closures and roadway damage that would result from trenching activities along the 3.6-mile underground segment would lead to higher temporary impacts during construction activities. Most impacts to traffic and transportation for the Farrell-Garnet study area.	Impact levels would be similar to the Proposed Project; however additional roadway closures and roadway damage that would result from trenching activities along the 3.0-mile underground segment would lead to higher temporary impacts during construction activities. More impacts to traffic and transportation than the proposed Mirage-Santa Rosa line.	Impact levels would be similar to the Proposed Project; however additional roadway closures and roadway damage that would result from trenching activities along the 1.0-mile underground segment would lead to higher temporary impacts during construction activities.	Impact levels would be similar to the Proposed Project; however since a greater number of roadways would be crossed by this alternative, temporary impacts to traffic during construction would be slightly higher than the Proposed Project.
Utilities and Service Systems	Impacts determined to be Class III. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference	Impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. No Preference

Implementation of the Proposed Project or any of the five alternatives would result in a significant unmitigable (Class I) impact on air quality during construction. Although impacts to air quality would be of varying degree (i.e., alternatives with an underground component would be slightly more adverse than the Proposed Project due to emissions during trenching activities), the impacts would be short term and temporary in nature; therefore, impacts of varying degree between alternatives is not material enough to determine a preferred alternative from an air quality perspective.

Resource categories where environmental impacts would either be materially lessened or increased by implementing an alternative to the Proposed Project are discussed below.

- Aesthetics** - Impacts would be potentially significant, but mitigable to less than significant for all of the alternatives. Alternative 7 would involve the most amount of overhead line in the Farrell-Garnet study area, including the most overhead line in residential areas and a crossing of I-10. Alternative 3 would involve the least amount of overhead line with no I-10 crossings. The ranking for the Farrell-Garnet study area (most to least favorable) is as follows: Alternative 3, Alternative 6, Alternative 2, the Proposed Project Farrell-Garnet line, and Alternative 7. For the Mirage-Santa Rosa study area, Alternative 5 would result in only a short span of overhead line across I-10 and the UPRR, compared to the Proposed Project Mirage-Santa Rosa line, which would include approximately 1.5 miles of overhead line. Therefore, Alternative 5 is more favorable than the Proposed Project Mirage-Santa Rosa line.
- Biological Resources** - Impacts would be potentially significant, but mitigable to less than significant for all of the alternatives. The Proposed Project alignments contain more suitable habitat for special status species than do the alternative alignments. Compared to the Proposed Project Farrell-Garnet line, Alternative 3 would result in the least amount of overhead line and associated long-term impacts, followed by Alternative 6, Alternative 2, the Proposed Project Farrell-Garnet line, and Alternative 7. Compared to the Proposed Project Mirage-Santa Rosa line, which would result in approximately 1.5 miles of new overhead line, Alternative 5 would result in only a short segment of overhead line associated with the I-10 and UPRR crossings.
- Cultural Resources** - Impacts would be potentially significant, but mitigable to less than significant for all of the alternatives. Alternative 6 and Alternative 7 would have no impact on the Garnet Hill cultural resource compared to the Proposed Project Farrell-Garnet line, Alternative 2, and Alternative 3. Between Alternatives 6 and 7, Alternative 6 would include a higher potential for an undiscovered find compared to Alternative 7 due to the one-mile underground line construction work that would be associated with Alternative 6. The ranking for the Farrell-Garnet study area (most to least favorable) is as follows: Alternative 7, Alternative 6, Alternative 3, the Proposed Project Farrell-Garnet line, and Alternative 2. Compared to the proposed Mirage-Santa Rosa line, Alternative 5 would avoid CA-RIV-785, 33-15429, and 33-15430. Therefore, Alternative 5 is more favorable than the Proposed Project Mirage-Santa Rosa line.
- Transportation and Traffic** - Impacts would be potentially significant, but mitigable to less than significant for all of the alternatives. Compared to the alternative lines, the Proposed Project lines would involve the least amount of construction work within or above roads. Compared to the Proposed Project Farrell-Garnet line, Alternative 3 would result in the most amount of underground line construction within roads, followed by Alternative 2 and Alternative 6. Alternative 7 would not include underground line work,

but would involve more overhead crossings than the Proposed Project Farrell-Garnet line. The ranking for the Farrell-Garnet study area (most to least favorable) is as follows: the Proposed Project Farrell-Garnet line, Alternative 7, Alternative 6, Alternative 2, and Alternative 3. Compared to the Proposed Project Mirage-Santa Rosa line, which would result in no underground line work, Alternative 5 would result in approximately three miles of underground line. Therefore, the Proposed Project Mirage-Santa Rosa line is more favorable than the Alternative 5 line.

While the Proposed Project subtransmission lines would result in the least amount of transportation and traffic impacts compared to the alternatives, these impacts would be primarily short-term and would conclude at the end of construction period. Because the Alternative 5 subtransmission line would result in less long-term aesthetics, biological resources, and cultural resources impacts compared to the Proposed Project Mirage-Santa Rosa line, Alternative 5 is selected as the Environmentally Superior Alternative for the Mirage-Santa Rosa study area. With regard to the Farrell-Garnet study area, Alternative 3 would result in the least amount of long-term aesthetics and biological resources impacts compared to the Proposed Project Farrell-Garnet subtransmission line and Alternatives 2, 6, and 7; however, Alternative 7 would result in the least amount of impacts to cultural resources compared to the Proposed Project Farrell-Garnet subtransmission line and Alternatives 2, 3, and 6. After considering all impacts, and the long length of Alternative 7, Alternative 3 is selected as the Environmentally Superior Alternative for the Farrell-Garnet study area.

5.4 No Project Alternative vs. the Environmentally Superior Alternative

5.4.1 Summary of the No Project Alternative and its Impacts

The No Project Alternative is described in Section 3.4.1. Under the No Project alternative, the Proposed Project would not be built. For the purposes of this EIR, the No Project Alternative includes the following two assumptions: 1) the project would not be implemented and the existing conditions in the study area would not be changed; and 2) new subtransmission and transmission lines and/or additional power generation would be constructed in or near the study area to supply power to the Electrical Needs Area. As described in Sections 4.1 through 4.16, the environmental impacts of the No Project Alternative would vary depending upon what other energy infrastructure construction or upgrades would occur to supply power to the Electrical Needs Area. Impacts may be generally similar to, or in the case of new generation, considerably greater than the Proposed Project.

5.4.2 Summary of the Environmentally Superior Alternative and its Impacts

The Environmentally Superior Alternatives are defined in Section 5.3 as Alternative 3 for the Farrell-Garnet study area and Alternative 5 for the Mirage-Santa Rosa study area. The impacts of Alternatives 3 and 5 are defined in each resource area's impact analysis in Sections 4.1 through 4.16, and are also summarized in Table 5-2, above. The Environmentally Superior Alternatives

would each have the same short-term construction related significant and unmitigable (Class I) impacts on air quality. As discussed in Sections 4.1 through 4.16, other types of impacts would also occur under Alternatives 3 and 5, but they would be either less than significant or mitigable to less than significant levels.

5.4.3 Conclusion: Comparison of the Environmentally Superior Alternative with the No Project Alternative

The Environmentally Superior Alternatives (Alternatives 3 and 5) would reduce long-term aesthetics and biological resources impacts and would have minimal long-term impacts on residences or other sensitive land uses. Under the No Project Alternative scenario, SCE may be required to construct new subtransmission and transmission lines and/or additional power generation in or near the study area to supply power to the Electrical Needs Area. It would be overly speculative for this EIR to assume where the new subtransmission and transmission facilities and/or power generation facilities would be sited; however, it is reasonable to assume that at a minimum, environmental impacts associated with the No Project Alternative scenario would not be less than those from the Environmentally Superior Alternatives. Therefore, the Environmentally Superior Alternatives are preferred over the No Project Alternative.