

3 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

3.1 AESTHETICS

3.1.1 Definitions

Aesthetic resources include the visual character and quality of an area, consisting of both the landscape features and the social environment from which it is viewed. The landscape features may be natural (e.g., mountain views) or manmade (e.g., a city’s skyline). Aesthetic resources include, but are not limited to:

- Federal, state, and local designated scenic resources
- Designated federal, state, and local historic properties
- Areas of high visual quality (i.e., scenic vistas, scenic hiking trails, scenic rivers, and scenic highways)
- Recreation areas such as parks and preserves
- Landscape features, including canyons and gorges, valleys, and mountains
- Dark night skies

Terms used to describe aesthetic resources are defined in Table 3.1-1.

Table 3.1-1 Definition of Visual Resources Terms

Term	Definition
Glare	Sunlight or another brilliant luminary reflecting off a specular (mirror-like) surface. The intensity of the reflection can be distracting, discomforting, or debilitating.
Glint	A momentary flash of glare that may be repetitive.
Intactness	The integrity of visual order in the natural and built landscape and the extent to which the landscape is free from visual encroachment.
Key Observation Point (KOP)	A location from which a viewer can see either iconic or representative landscapes of the project. Used for visual simulations.
Landscape Character Unit (LCU)	Defined areas that have similar visual features, homogeneous visual character, and frequently, a single viewshed. Typically, it is the spatial unit used to assess visual impacts.
Scenic Vista	A distant public view that is recognized or valued for its visual quality, located along or through an opening or corridor.
Skyline	An outline of land and buildings defined against the sky.
Unity	The degree to which the visual resources of the landscape join together to form a coherent, harmonious visual pattern; the compositional harmony or inter-compatibility between landscape elements.

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Term	Definition
Viewer Exposure	A measure of proximity (the distance between viewer and the visual resource being viewed), extent (the number of viewers viewing), and duration (how long the visual resource is being viewed). The greater the exposure, the more viewers will be concerned about visual impacts.
Viewer Awareness	A measure of attention (level of observation based on routine and familiarity), focus (level of concentration), and protection (legal and social constraints on the use of visual resources). The greater the awareness, the more viewers will be concerned about visual impacts.
Viewer Sensitivity	The degree to which viewers are sensitive to changes in the visual character of visual resources. Viewer sensitivity reflects both viewer exposure and viewer awareness.
Viewshed	The surface area visible from a particular location (e.g., an overlook) or sequence of locations (e.g., a roadway or trail).
Visual Quality	What viewers like and dislike about visual resources that compose the visual character of a particular scene. Viewers may evaluate visual resources differently based on their interests in natural harmony, cultural order, and project coherence.
Visual Simulation	Two or three dimensional depictions of the visual character of a future state. Simulations range from artistic renderings to computer animations.
Viewer	A person located within the project viewshed who can observe the project.
Vividness	The visual power or memorability of the visual impression received from contrasting landscape elements as they combine in distinctive visual patterns.

Sources: (Federal Highway Administration 1988, Federal Highway Administration 2015)

3.1.2 Environmental Setting

Regional Setting

The proposed project is located in southern California within the western edge of the Peninsular Ranges. The Peninsular Ranges are a group of mountain ranges running approximately north-south and stretching from Los Angeles to Baja Mexico with peaks over 10,000 feet. Landforms in the proposed project area include the Santa Ana Mountains to the north and lower ranges of hills that slope directly to the coastline. Creeks running south to the Pacific Ocean provide more level valley areas, where development tends to occur. Elevations along the proposed project route range from 130 feet to 750 feet above mean sea level (amsl).

The proposed project would cross largely through rugged and hilly terrain in undeveloped areas. Much of the vegetation in the proposed project area consists of evenly-distributed, low-growing coastal sage scrub with distinct riparian willow scrub and sycamore-alder woodland present along San Mateo and San Onofre Creeks. Surrounding land uses primarily include MCB CPEN training areas, San Onofre State Beach, and undeveloped land. Other land uses that shape the visual landscape include the developed portions of the City of San Clemente, private residences, military housing, golf courses, paved and unpaved roads, SONGS, and commercial uses.

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Electric transmission, power, and distribution facilities are visually evident within the proposed project vicinity. Electrical facilities in the area include substations, steel lattice towers, steel pole structures, wood pole structures, and overhead power lines.

Proposed Project Setting

Landscape Character Units

The proposed project area is divided into six representative LCUs to effectively describe the visual features of the area. Each LCU has landscape conditions that are generally similar and have common basic visual characteristics of line, form, color, and texture. The locations of the proposed project LCUs are shown on Figure 3.1-1. The existing visual conditions and representative photographs of each LCU are presented in Table 3.1-2. The representative photograph of each LCU shows characteristic features of that LCU along the proposed project alignment.

Scenic Vistas

The City of San Clemente has designated two scenic vistas: (1) Knob Hill on the Rancho San Clemente Trail near Avenida Pico and Calle del Cerro, approximately 1.7 miles west of the proposed project, and (2) on a ridgeline near the Forester Ranch Ridgeline Trail by Costero Risco, approximately 2.6 miles west of the proposed project (City of San Clemente 2014). Views of the proposed project area from these vista points are obstructed by topography and development.

The City of San Clemente has designated public view corridors and significant ridgelines throughout the City that contain views of natural landforms, the City's Spanish Village by the Sea, and the shoreline (City of San Clemente 2014). No public view corridors offer views of the proposed project area. The proposed project area is visible from one significant ridgeline, the easternmost segment of the Rancho San Clemente Trail, located approximately 0.5 mile west of the proposed project.

Scenic Corridors and Highways

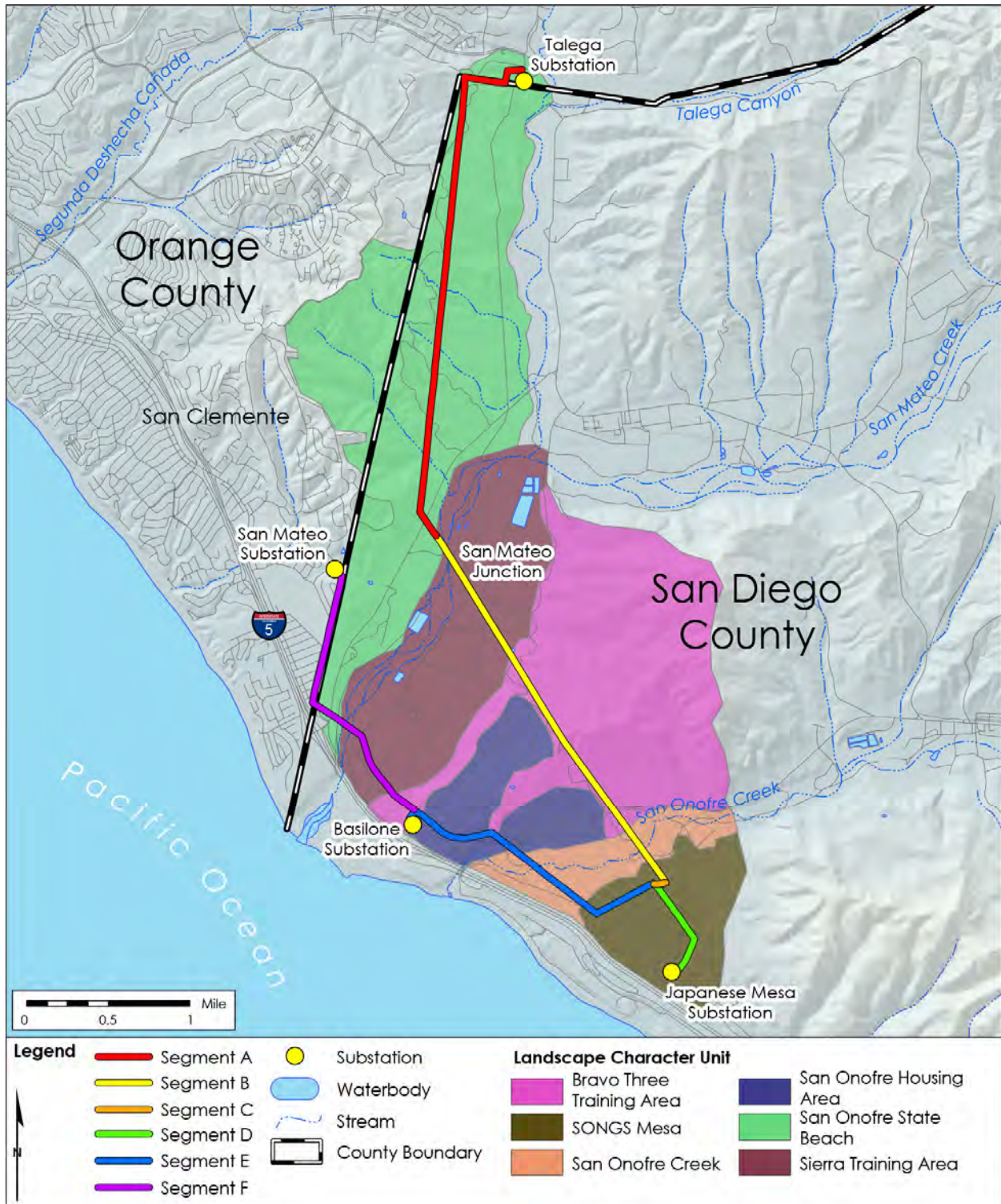
The proposed project area is not visible from any designated state scenic highways. The nearest state scenic highway is State Route (SR) 91 between SR-55 and just east of the Anaheim city limit, located approximately 30 miles from the proposed project area.

Interstate 5 (I-5) between SR-74 and SR-75 (southern Orange County to southern San Diego County) is an eligible state scenic highway (Caltrans 2016). I-5 is located approximately 300 feet from the proposed project area at the closest point. Segments E and F of the proposed project area are visible from I-5.

The City of San Clemente has designated a network of scenic corridors throughout the City (City of San Clemente 2014). Avenida Pico is the only scenic corridor with views of the proposed project area.


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Figure 3.1-1 Landscape Character Units in the Proposed Project Area




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Table 3.1-2 Description of Landscape Character Units

Description	Representative Image
San Onofre State Beach LCU	
<p>Location. Extends from Talega Substation to Cristianitos Road and I-5</p> <p>Characteristic features. Undeveloped lands with gently rolling to steep topography trending from a northwest to southeast direction. Vegetation is dominated by coast live oak woodland, Diegan coastal sage scrub, and non-native grassland. Many access roads, trails, and fire breaks weave through this LCU. Transmission corridors cross the unit in the north. Foreground and middle ground views of the LCU are available from Mountains' Lookout, various trails, San Mateo Campground, and Cristianitos Road.</p> <p>Visually dominant features. Talega Substation, transmission and utility lines, Cristianitos Road, San Mateo Campground</p> <p>Intactness. Low</p> <p>Unity. Low</p> <p>Vividness. Moderate</p> <p>Visual Quality. Low</p>	


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Description	Representative Image
Sierra Training Area LCU	
<p>Location. MCB CPEN Sierra Training Area</p> <p>Characteristic features. San Mateo Creek, its floodplain, and the Sierra Training Area. Disturbed grassland areas are used for Marine Corps training. Riparian vegetation surrounding San Mateo Creek includes willow scrub, mulefat scrub, and sycamore-alder woodland.</p> <p>This LCU is not open to the general public; however, the LCU can be seen from Cristianitos Road, San Mateo Campground, San Onofre State Beach, and I-5. Views are backdropped by the mountains of San Onofre State Beach or by the San Onofre Housing Area.</p> <p>Visually dominant features. Power lines, MCB CPEN operational buildings, training facilities</p> <p>Intactness. Low</p> <p>Unity. Low</p> <p>Vividness. Moderate</p> <p>Visual Quality. Low to Moderate</p>	

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Description	Representative Image
Bravo Three Training Area LCU	
<p>Location. Extends from Sierra Training Area to SONGS Mesa</p> <p>Characteristic features. Undeveloped open space and a ridgeline with moderate to steep topography. Vegetation is dominated by dense Diegan coastal sage scrub.</p> <p>This LCU is not open to the public; however, the northwest-facing slopes of the LCU can be seen in the middle ground from Cristianitos Road, San Mateo Campground, San Onofre State Beach, and I-5 traveling south. The southeast-facing slopes of the LCU can be seen in the middle ground from I-5 and Old Pacific Highway 101 when traveling north and the San Onofre State Beach entrance kiosk.</p> <p>Visually dominant features. Sky-lined transmission line towers and ridgeline fire breaks</p> <p>Intactness. Moderate</p> <p>Unity. Moderate</p> <p>Vividness. Moderate</p> <p>Visual Quality. Moderate</p>	

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Description	Representative Image
San Onofre Housing Area LCU	
<p>Location. Extends from I-5 down Basilone Road and Chaisson Drive</p> <p>Characteristic features. Highly developed and varied composition of housing, streets, schools, and community facilities. Native and exotic vegetation is present.</p> <p>This LCU is not open to the general public; however, the housing area is visible in the foreground from I-5 traveling in both directions and Old Pacific Highway 101 when traveling north. The housing area may also be seen in the middle ground from the San Onofre State Beach entrance kiosk.</p> <p>Visually dominant features. Sky-lined transmission line towers, housing, Basilone Substation</p> <p>Intactness. Low</p> <p>Unity. Low</p> <p>Vividness. Low</p> <p>Visual Quality. Low</p>	 A photograph showing a residential area with several houses, a utility pole with power lines, and a large hill in the background under a clear blue sky. The houses are multi-story with light-colored walls and dark roofs. The utility pole is tall and black, with several cross-arms and wires. The hill in the background is large and has a mix of green and brown vegetation. The sky is clear and blue.

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Description	Representative Image
San Onofre Creek LCU	
<p>Location. San Onofre Creek and floodplain</p> <p>Characteristic features. San Onofre Creek, its floodplain, and the generally level alluvial benches that surround the floodplain. Outside the meandering sandy creek channel, riparian vegetation consists of willow scrub and mulefat scrub.</p> <p>This LCU is not open to the general public; however, direct foreground views of the LCU are available from I-5 and Old Pacific Highway 101 when traveling north. The LCU can also be seen in the foreground from the San Onofre State Beach entrance kiosk.</p> <p>Visually dominant features. Transmission and distribution line facilities</p> <p>Intactness. Moderate</p> <p>Unity. Low</p> <p>Vividness. Moderate</p> <p>Visual Quality. Low to Moderate</p>	

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Description	Representative Image
SONGS Mesa LCU	
<p>Location. Mesa between San Onofre Creek and mountains to the south</p> <p>Characteristic features. SONGS Mesa staging yard and surrounding slopes covered in Diegan coastal sage scrub and some non-native trees.</p> <p>This LCU is not open to the general public. Most of the SONGS Mesa staging yard is not highly visible from public vantage points due to intervening topography; however, portions of the LCU can be seen from I-5, the Metrolink Rail line, Old Pacific Highway 101, and the San Onofre State Beach entrance kiosk.</p> <p>Visually dominant features. SONGS Mesa staging yard, I-5, transmission lines between SONGS and SONGS Mesa</p> <p>Intactness. Low</p> <p>Unity. Low</p> <p>Vividness. Moderately High</p> <p>Visual Quality. Low to Moderate</p>	

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3.1.3 Impact Analysis

Approach to Impact Analysis

Visual Impact Significance

The significance of aesthetic impacts is determined based on a combination of viewer sensitivity and the degree of visual change caused by the proposed project. The interrelationship of these two factors in determining the significance of adverse aesthetic impacts is shown in Table 3.1-3.

Table 3.1-3 Guidelines for Determining the Significance of Adverse Visual Impact

Overall Viewer Sensitivity	Overall Visual Change				
	Low	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to High	High
Low	Not Significant	Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant
Low to Moderate	Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant
Moderate	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse and Potentially Significant	Adverse and Potentially Significant
Moderate to High	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse and Potentially Significant	Adverse and Potentially Significant	Significant
High	Adverse, but Not Significant	Adverse and Potentially Significant	Adverse and Potentially Significant	Significant	Significant

Not Significant impacts may or may not be perceptible but are considered minor in the context of existing landscape characteristics and view opportunity.

Adverse but Not Significant impacts are perceived as negative but do not exceed environmental thresholds.

Adverse and Potentially Significant impacts are perceived as negative and may exceed environmental thresholds depending on project and site-specific circumstances.

Significant impacts with feasible mitigation may be reduced to less than significant levels or avoided all together. Without mitigation or avoidance measures, significant impacts would exceed environmental thresholds.

Key Observation Points

Six KOPs were selected to analyze visual impacts from the proposed project. These KOPs depict representative public views of the proposed project across each publicly visible landscape unit. It is assumed that military personnel involved in training operations have low sensitivity to visual changes because their attention would be focused on DoD mission-related activities; therefore, views from areas that are not publicly accessible within MCB CPEN were not considered in the visual assessment. Photographs of existing conditions were taken at each of the KOPs to represent the baseline conditions, and visual simulations were developed for each KOP to represent views of the proposed project. The locations of KOPs are shown on Figure 3.1-2. Table 3.1-4 presents a summary of the KOPs. The photos of baseline/existing conditions and visual simulations provided below are representative of the visual conditions prior to and after construction of the proposed project from each KOP (Figure 3.1-3 through Figure 3.1-14).

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Figure 3.1-2 Key Observation Points



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Table 3.1-4 Description of Key Observation Points and Viewer Sensitivity

KOP	Location of Viewpoint	Project Elements	Direction of View	Description of Views	Viewer Sensitivity
1	I-5, northbound over the San Onofre Creek drainage	Segment B and Segment E	North	Foreground: San Onofre Creek Middle ground: San Onofre Housing Area, Bravo Three Training Area, transmission and power lines	Low to Moderate
2	I-5, northbound over the San Onofre Creek drainage	Segment E	Northeast	Foreground: San Onofre Creek Middle ground: San Onofre Housing Area, transmission and power lines	Low to Moderate
3	San Onofre State Beach – Trestles Beach Parking Area on S El Camino Real	Segment F	East	Foreground: San Onofre State Beach – Trestles Beach Parking Area, TL 695 (existing alignment)	Moderate to High
4	San Onofre State Beach – Trestles Beach Parking Area on S El Camino Real	Segment F	North	Foreground: San Onofre State Beach, TL 695 (existing alignment), access road/trail	Moderate to High
5	San Onofre State Beach lease area trail near Pole 23	Segment A	South	Foreground: San Onofre State Beach, transmission and power lines Middle ground: Sierra Training Area, San Onofre Housing Area	High
6	San Onofre State Beach lease area trail near Talega Substation	Segment A	West	Foreground: San Onofre State Beach, TL 695 (existing alignment), access road/trail	High

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Figure 3.1-3 KOP #1 Existing Conditions



Source: SDG&E 2016b

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Figure 3.1-4 KOP #1 Visual Simulation



Source: SDG&E 2016b

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Figure 3.1-5 KOP #2 Existing Conditions



Source: SDG&E 2016b

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Figure 3.1-6 KOP #2 Visual Simulation



Source: SDG&E 2016b

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Figure 3.1-7 KOP #3 Existing Conditions



Source: SDG&E 2016a

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Figure 3.1-8 KOP #3 Visual Simulation



Source: SDG&E 2016a

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Figure 3.1-9 KOP #4 Existing Conditions



Source: SDG&E 2016a

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Figure 3.1-10 KOP #4 Visual Simulation



Source: SDG&E 2016a

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Figure 3.1-11 KOP #5 Existing Conditions



Source: SDG&E 2016a

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Figure 3.1-12 KOP #5 Visual Simulation



Source: SDG&E 2016a

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Figure 3.1-13 KOP #6 Existing Conditions



Source: SDG&E 2016a

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Figure 3.1-14 KOP #6 Visual Simulation



Source: SDG&E 2016a

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Summary of Impacts

Table 3.1-5 presents a summary of the CEQA significance criteria and impacts on aesthetics that would occur during construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed project.

Table 3.1-5 Summary of Proposed Project Impacts on Aesthetics

Would the Proposed Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact Discussion

a) Would the proposed project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	Significance Determination
	Less than significant

The proposed project would not be visible from any designated or eligible federal, state, county, or city scenic vista. There would be no impact on designated scenic vistas from construction, operation, or maintenance of the proposed project.

Public view corridors and significant ridgelines designated by the City of San Clemente also function as scenic vistas. The proposed project would not be readily visible from any City of San Clemente public view corridors due to intervening topography, development, and infrastructure. Segment A would be visible from a significant ridgeline, Rancho San Clemente Trail, located approximately 0.4 mile from the proposed project; however, views of the proposed project would mostly be obscured by the four larger and taller existing transmission lines present in the same corridor as the proposed project. The impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

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b) Would the proposed project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	Significance Determination
	Less than significant

Construction

There are no scenic trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings that would be affected by the proposed project. As described in Section 3.5: Cultural, Tribal Cultural, and Paleontological Resources, there are no eligible historic buildings (pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5) in the proposed project area; therefore, no historic buildings would be visually impacted by the proposed project. Visual impacts on cultural landscapes are analyzed in Section 3.5: Cultural, Tribal Cultural, and Paleontological Resources.

The closest designated scenic highway is SR-74, located approximately 30 miles north of the proposed project. The proposed project would not be visible from SR-74 due to intervening topography, built structures, vegetation, and distance from the project. The proposed project would have no impact on scenic resources within a designated state scenic highway.

The segment of I-5 near the proposed project is eligible for listing as a state scenic highway. Construction activities, including pole topping, pole replacement, reconductoring, and helicopter operations, would be visible from I-5. Construction activities would last for a few days at each pole location. Travelers along I-5 could view construction activities for only a few minutes due to the fast speeds (i.e., posted speed limit of 65 miles per hour) at which motorists travel along the highway. Because of the short exposure time and temporary nature of construction activities, impacts on scenic resources within an eligible scenic highway would be less than significant.

Operation and Maintenance

Segments E and F of the proposed project would be visible from I-5. The proposed project would involve the removal of conductor and topping of poles in Segment F; no adverse visual change would result from the topping of poles and the removal of conductor.

Figure 3.1-3 through Figure 3.1-6 provide representative views from I-5 of the existing scenic conditions and the scenic conditions with the proposed project. Segment E would be approximately 670 feet from I-5 at the closest point. In Segment E, new steel poles would replace existing wood poles in areas visible from I-5. The new poles would be, on average, approximately 20 feet taller than existing poles, and located, on average, approximately 12 feet from existing pole locations but within the same alignment. As shown in Figure 3.1-6, Segment E would be moderately skylined; however, the proposed project would be less visually prominent than other, closer existing power and communication lines (Figure 3.1-6), as well as farther, but larger, existing transmission lines (Figure 3.1-4). Additionally, the proposed project would be visually consistent with the other transmission and communications infrastructure located in the same viewshed. Impacts on scenic resources from I-5 would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

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c) Would the proposed project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	Significance Determination
	Less than significant

Construction

Overview

Project construction would introduce construction equipment to the visual landscape and result in landscape alterations through vegetation removal and erection of new poles. Construction activities including site preparation (vegetation removal and grading/blading), pole replacement, conductor removal and stringing, and pole topping would be visible from surrounding areas.

Site Preparation

Installation of new poles would require minor earthwork and vegetation clearing from a 20-foot radius work area for direct-bury pole structures; a 75- by 75-foot work area for pier foundation pole structures; and a 10-foot radius work area for overhead work, pole structure removal, pole topping, and conductor stringing along Segment B. Site preparation activities would not last more than a few days at each work area. Views of graded work areas would persist after construction because it would take time for vegetation to reestablish in areas that are temporarily disturbed by construction. Viewer sensitivity would be moderate (along I-5) to high (within the San Onofre State Beach lease area); however, the existing visual quality within the I-15 proposed project area ranges from low to moderate and the visual change would be low. The denuded land surface of work areas where poles would be removed would be consistent with existing maintained cleared areas around existing transmission structures, and the numerous fuel breaks and access roads that meander through the project area and San Onofre State Beach; therefore, the resulting impact on visual quality from vegetation removal and grading would be less than significant (per Table 3.1-3).

Access Roads

Access road maintenance and re-establishment would be conducted on existing SDG&E access roads and a new 50-foot segment of access road. Access road maintenance activities including grading, vegetation clearing, and resurfacing of the existing access roads would not affect visual quality because the access road re-establishment activities would be conducted within the SDG&E's existing access road width. The new 50-foot segment of access road to Pole 102 would be located adjacent to the Japanese Mesa Substation and SONGS Mesa Staging Yard in an area with low visual quality. The new segment of access road would appear similar to the existing infrastructure in the area and would have a less than significant impact on visual quality.

Pole Installation and Removal and Conductor Stringing

Large construction equipment such as truck-mounted augurs, concrete trucks, cranes, and helicopters would be used to transport materials, remove and install pole structures and foundations, and remove and install conductor. Pole structure removal and installation activities would last 1 to 5 days and up to 10 days if rock splitting is required to install the

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foundation. The conductor stringing phase would last for up to 60 days, but conductor stringing would only occur for a few days in each area. The heavy equipment and helicopters would result in a low degree of visual change because heavy equipment (e.g., tanks) and helicopters are currently used throughout MCB CPEN for military operations. Viewer sensitivity to the temporary visual change would be low due to the short duration of exposure to views of construction equipment at each pole location. The resulting impact on visual quality would be less than significant.

Staging Yards

Material and construction equipment storage, staging, and helicopter take-off and landing would take place at the staging yards and helicopter ILAs described in Section 2: Project Description. Staging yards and helicopter ILAs would be located in previously disturbed areas; however, mowing may be required to prepare the yards. Views of staging areas and helicopter ILAs within MCB CPEN (Basilone Road, SDG&E Lot 4, SONGS Mesa, Area 62 Helo, Sierra North Helo, and Sierra South Helo) and areas regularly used for material and equipment staging (Talega staging yards, San Mateo staging yard, San Mateo Helo, and Lemon Grove staging yard) would not degrade the visual quality of the surrounding area because large vehicles and helicopters are frequently seen in these areas. The presence of SDG&E equipment would result in a low visual change in these areas and viewer sensitivity to the helicopters and heavy equipment would be low. Impacts would be less than significant.

One helicopter ILA, Talega Helo West, would be located on Avenida Pico. The area around Avenida Pico is developed with housing, landscaping, and hardscaping that contribute to the low visual quality of the area. The presence of construction materials and helicopters would not degrade the visual quality of the surrounding area because the helicopter ILA would be located on the road and in an area that exhibits low visual quality. Additionally, views of the helicopter ILA would be short-term (eight months during construction). Visual sensitivity would be low as would visual change. Impacts on the visual quality of the area around Avenida Pico would be less than significant.

Operation and Maintenance

Overview

Steel pole structures would replace existing wood poles along the proposed project alignment in Segments A, D, and E. Existing wooden poles would be topped in Segment F. The proposed project would be visible from public viewpoints along I-5, local roadways, and within the San Onofre State Beach lease area.

Views from I-5

KOPs #1 and #2 (Figure 3.1-3 through Figure 3.1-6) provide representative views of Segment E from I-5. As shown in the visual simulations, the visual change resulting from the proposed project would be low; the new pole structures would be only slightly more prominent and slightly taller than the existing structures. Viewer sensitivity would be low to moderate because the new poles would only be visible to travelers along I-5 for a few minutes due to the fast speeds (posted speed limit of 65 miles per hour) at which motorists travel along the highway.

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Because of the low visual change and short exposure time to the visual change, impacts would be less than significant.

Views from Other Roadways

Segments A, B, and F would be visible from other roadways in the proposed project area, including Cristianitos Road. The proposed project would be located within existing transmission corridors in these segments. Viewer sensitivity would generally be low to moderate along roadways because motorists' attention would be focused on the road and the visual quality in Segments A, B, and F is low to moderate. Along Segment A, the proposed project pole structures would be slightly taller and larger than existing structures; however, these pole structures would still be shorter and smaller than the adjacent and visually dominant steel lattice towers that exist in the transmission corridor, and the resulting level of visual change in Segment A would be low. Along Segment B, conductor would be strung on existing steel lattice towers that support other existing transmission lines. The proposed project conductor would be visually comparable to the existing power and transmission line conductor and would result in a low to imperceptible level of visual change. Existing wooden poles along Segment F would be topped; the resulting poles would be shorter and less visually prominent than existing poles (see Figure 3.1-8 and Figure 3.1-10). Topping the poles would not adversely affect visual quality in the proposed project area. Impacts on visual quality would be low and less than significant.

Views from San Onofre State Beach

Viewer sensitivity within the San Onofre State Beach lease area is generally high because hikers, campers, and other recreationists travel to the area in part for the views of open space areas. The proposed project's steel pole structures would be installed in transmission corridors with several adjacent existing transmission and power lines. Due to the existing transmission and power lines, the visual quality within the San Onofre State Beach is currently low. While the proposed project pole structures would appear larger and slightly taller than the existing wooden power poles, the proposed project pole structures would be shorter than the adjacent and more visually dominant steel lattice towers (see Figure 3.1-10 and Figure 3.1-11). The proposed project power line and pole structures would be comparable to the existing power line and poles in both form and line. While viewer sensitivity is high, the perceptible visual change would be very low. The resulting impact on visual quality would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

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d) Would the proposed project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	Significance Determination
	Less than significant with mitigation

Construction

Lighting would be used to the extent required by safety needs and emergencies. Construction would generally occur within standard daylight work hours (7:00 am to 6:00 pm on weekdays and 8:00 am to 6:00 pm on Saturdays) with the City of San Clemente and could occur at any time within MCB CPEN. Nighttime lighting from construction activities could have a significant impact on sensitive viewers, particularly in adjacent residential areas. MM Aesthetics-1 requires SDG&E to direct all nighttime lighting away from sensitive receptors. Impacts from night lighting would be less than significant with implementation of MM Aesthetics-1.

SDG&E would install fencing around staging yards and helicopter ILAs, where fencing is not currently present. Fencing can produce minor amounts of glare, but fences are not a source of distracting glare. Metallic elements are common in the viewshed at all but one of the proposed staging yards and ILAs because the areas are either currently used for staging and storage or are located in industrial or military areas. The potential glare from staging yard fences installed for the proposed project would be comparable to the existing fences and metallic elements currently present in the area. The impact from glare would be less than significant.

Operation and Maintenance

The proposed project would not introduce any permanent sources of lighting. No impact from lighting would occur.

Dull galvanized steel poles would be installed as part of the proposed project, which would not produce glare due to the dulled metal surface. SDG&E would install specular conductor, which could reflect sunlight and produce glare that could be seen in foreground and middle ground views from roadways and trails. The conductor would be installed in areas where there are existing power and transmission lines and the proposed line would replace existing specular conductor in the area. The proposed project would not create a substantial new source of glare due to the presence of existing specular conductor in the area. The impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: MM Aesthetics-1

3.1 AESTHETICS

3.1.4 Mitigation Measures

MM Aesthetics-1: Nighttime Lighting

All nighttime lighting shall be shielded, pointed down, and directed away from surrounding properties. Lights will not be left on at night, except as required for nighttime work and/or an emergency.

Applicable Locations: All areas where nighttime lighting is used for construction

Performance Standards and Timing:

Before Construction: N/A

During Construction: (1) All nighttime is shielded and directed away from surrounding properties (2) Lights are not left on except as required for nighttime work and/or an emergency

After Construction: N/A

3.1.5 References

- Caltrans. 2016. *California Scenic Highway Mapping System, Orange and San Diego Counties*. Accessed October 21, 2016.
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- City of San Clemente. 2014. "Centennial General Plan."
- Federal Highway Administration. 2015. "Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects." *US Department of Transportation*. Accessed July 19, 2016.
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<http://www.dot.ca.gov/ser/downloads/visual/FHWAVisualImpactAssmt.pdf>.
- SDG&E. 2016a. "SDG&E Response to EDDR-1 Qs 2-21, 23-37. Permit to Construct the TL 695 and TL 6971 Reconductor Project -- Application No. A.16-04-022."
- . 2016b. "SDG&E Response to EDDR-1 Qs 22. Permit to Construct the TL 695 and TL 6971 Reconductor Project -- Application No. A.16-04-022."