D R A F T

MITIGATION NEGATIVE DECLARATION

SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY
VALLEY CENTER SUBSTATION PROJECT
Application No. 99-09016

Lead Agency:

CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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SECTION 1.0
INTRODUCTION

1.1 SUMMARY OF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

On September 3, 1999, San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) filed Application No. 99-09016 pursuant to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) General Order No. 131-D requesting authority for a Permit To Construct the Valley Center Substation project. The Valley Center Substation project would be located in the unincorporated community of Valley Center in north-central San Diego County. The proposed substation is planned to be 112 MVA with four 28 MVA transformers and sixteen 12 kV (kilovolt) circuits. A 10-foot high wall will enclose the substation area (approximately 200 feet by 260 feet) and landscaping will be established from the beginning of the project (see *Section 2, Project Description,* for further details).

SDG&E is a public utility corporation engaged principally in the business of providing electric service to a portion of Orange County, California, and electric and gas service to San Diego County, California. In providing electrical power sources to the Valley Center area of San Diego County, SDG&E currently operates two substations. A recent SDG&E area planning study indicates that the current capacity of these substations will be reached in 2001.

The objective of the proposed Valley Center Substation is to provide additional electricity to meet expected load growth and meet reliability criteria.

1.2 AUTHORITY TO PREPARE A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

The CPUC is the lead agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is responsible for authorizing the construction of the Valley Center Substation project. The CPUC's process for granting a Permit to Construct is focused on consideration of the environmental issues and concerns surrounding the project as proposed. In compliance with requirements of CEQA, an Initial Study was prepared for the project. This environmental study is specific to the construction of the Valley Center Substation at the proposed site. An Initial Study under CEQA does not require the CPUC to analyze alternatives including alternative sites (CEQA Guidelines §15063[d]). However, as part of SDG&E's application to the CPUC, a site selection study was done. The site selection study led to the approval of the proposed site and project design by both the Valley Center Community Planning Group and Valley Center Design Review Board.

Based on the approval of the proposed project by the Valley Center Community Planning Group and the Valley Center Design Review Board, along with the findings of the Initial

Study/Environmental Evaluation (see *Section 4, Initial Study/ Environmental Checklist* and *Section 5, Discussion of Environmental Impacts*), the CPUC has made the determination that a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is the appropriate environmental document to be prepared in compliance with CEQA. As provided for by CEQA §21064.5, an MND may be prepared for a project subject to CEQA when an Initial Study has identified potentially significant effects on the environment but revisions in the project have been made where clearly no significant effect on the environment would occur.

This draft MND has been prepared in conformance with §15070, subsection (a), of the State CEQA Guidelines. The purpose of the MND and the Initial Study/Environmental Evaluation is to determine the potential significant impacts associated with the proposed Valley Center Substation project and incorporate mitigation measures into the project design as necessary to reduce or eliminate the significant or potentially significant effects of the project.

1.3 CONTENT AND FORMAT OF MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

This MND includes the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendices to the MND:

- Appendix A Public Distribution List
- Appendix B Site Selection
- Appendix C Aesthetics
- Appendix D Biological Resources
- Appendix E Cultural Resources

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

- Proponents Environmental Assessment (PEA) for the Valley Center Substation, SDG&E September 1999, amended November 1999 and December 1999. This document provides the basis for preparation of this MND and includes the following technical reports:

  – – *Geotechnical Investigation*, URS Greiner Woodward Clyde, May 1999.
  – – *Site Assessment*, Vista Information Solutions, August 1997.
  – – *Sound Level Analysis*, SDG&E, April 1999.

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

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

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

1.5 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

In accordance with CEQA, a good faith effort has been made during the preparation of this MND to contact affected agencies, organizations and persons who may have an interest in this project. The distribution list for the MND is provided in APPENDIX A.
The CPUC will also be providing a notice of availability to property owners within 300 feet of the project and will also be publishing this notice in the local newspaper, in accordance with the CPUC Rule 17.1 of the Rules of Practice and Procedures. This document is also being made available on CPUC's website at the following address: http://www/cpuc.ca.gov.

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

Comments may be made on the MND either in writing before the end of the comment period or at the public hearing to be held by the CPUC on the MND. A 30-day review and comment period from February 3, 2000 to March 3, 2000 has been established, in accordance with §15105(b) of the CEQA guidelines. Following the close of the public comment period, the CPUC will consider this MND and comments thereto in determining whether to approve the proposed project. Written comments on the MND should be sent to the following address by March 3, 2000, at 5:00 PM.

California Public Utilities Commission
Energy Division, Analysis Branch
505 Van Ness Avenue, Room 4007
San Francisco, CA 94102
Attention: Beth Shipley

SECTION 2.0
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PURPOSE AND NEED

SDG&E provides electrical power services in the Valley Center area of the County of San Diego. In providing these services, SDG&E currently operates two substations, referred to as the *Lilac Substation* and the *Rincon Substation*. According to San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), the estimated 1998 population of Valley Center is 15,538. The population grew by approximately 2,578 persons from 1990-1998. This represents a 20% increase in population during that eight-year period. According to the 1998 SANDAG data, the projected total population for the Valley Center planning area for the year 2020 is 29,810, which would be a 92% increase during the 22-year period.

The most recent (1999) SDG&E electrical load forecast, based on the level of development contemplated in the existing County of San Diego General Plan, as well as regional population projections by SANDAG has revealed the following problems in the existing system serving the Valley Center area.

1. Lilac Substation will be overloaded in the year 2001 by 1.0 mega watt (MW) and the overload will get worse every year thereafter.
2. The projected substation tie deficiency at the Lilac Substation is 14.4 MW in the year 2001. The substation tie deficiency is the amount of load that will be dropped in the event of a substation bank failure and that load would not be picked up until the bank is repaired or replaced.
3. Rincon Substation will be overloaded in the year 2001 by 1.5 MW with increasing overloads every year thereafter.
4. The projected substation tie deficiency at the Rincon Substation is 13.4 MW in the year 2001.
5. The projected area load center for the year 2011, combining both planned and existing loads, is 31 MW near the intersection of Valley Center Road and Cole Grade Road. This load center is located approximately 7.5 miles from the Rincon Substation and 5.5 miles from the Lilac Substation, via the existing distribution system.

The proposed Valley Center Substation is required in order to address the problems in the existing system serving the Valley Center area described above and to ensure reliable service to the existing load as well as anticipated electrical load growth.

2.2 PROJECT LOCATION/SITE SELECTION

The proposed project is located in the unincorporated community of Valley Center in north-central San Diego County. The project site is 13.07 acres in size and currently is in a relatively natural state with some grading to bare ground at the northwestern corner of the property. The site is bordered by Vesper Road to the north and Valley Center Road to the west and south. Residences and undeveloped land exist to the west and east. Agricultural uses exist to the north and south. Offices of the Valley Center Municipal Water District are located to the northwest. The closest residence to the proposed substation perimeter wall is approximately 450 feet to the east. The closest commercial use is located across Vesper Road to the north approximately 400 feet from the proposed substation perimeter wall. Only the north half of the parcel or approximately three acres would be impacted by the development of the substation and access driveways. The south half would be mostly unaffected by the project except for being crossed by the underground transmission line and a portion of the access road. *Figure 1* shows the regional location of the project site and *Figure 2* shows the project site location on a USGS topographic map.

One of the main requirements in siting the proposed substation was that it needed to be located within a one-mile radius of the projected load center (near the intersection of Valley Center Road and Cole Grade Road). In 1974, SDG&E performed a site selection study to find a suitable site within a one-mile radius of the projected load center. That effort resulted in the purchase of a 6.77-acre site located east of the proposed site and north of Valley Center Road. The property was purchased for the purpose of constructing a new substation to meet the electric demands at that time. However, due to slow growth in this area, the need for the substation was delayed. In 1997, new load studies identified the need for a substation in Valley Center. When SDG&E proposed to build a substation on the property in 1998, the Valley Center Community Planning Group opposed the substation being built at this site and requested that SDG&E look at alternative sites.

Thus, SDG&E performed a new site study and as discussed in APPENDIX B to this MND, worked closely with the Valley Center Community Planning Group and Design Review Board in selecting the proposed project site and in designing the project. The 1998 site selection study consisted of fifteen potential sites for a proposed electric substation in the community of Valley Center. These fifteen candidate sites were selected from site visits, review of the Community Plan, existing land use, zoning and hydrological research. Five of the fifteen sites were determined to be not feasible for substation construction due to lack of access, floodplains, acreage constraints, and land use incompatibilities.

In November 1998, SDG&E representatives presented a progress report of the site selection study

to the Valley Center Community Planning Group. SDG&E requested a subcommittee of the Planning Board be appointed to assist in the site selection study. The Chair of the Board nominated four Figure 1 Regional Map

Figure 2 Vicinity Map

people, two Planning Board members, and two Valley Center residents as the subcommittee members, which were unanimously approved.

In December 1998, the subcommittee met to hear the results of SDG&E's analysis and ranking of the remaining ten candidate sites. The subcommittee was asked to vote on five sites in two categories: land use compatibility and community approval. In December 1998, SDG&E then presented the results of the site selection study to the Valley Center Community Planning Board. The top five SDG&E sites and the top five subcommittee sites were presented to the Board. The Board approved SDG&E's proposed site with a majority vote, which was the Board's first choice as well.

2.3 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The proposed project is planned to be a 112-megavolt ampere (MVA) substation with the loop-in of the existing 69 kV transmission line (see *Figure 3*). The proposed substation at full buildout is planned to have four 28 MVA transformers, four 69 kV tie lines, and sixteen 12 kilovolt (kV) circuits. Area of temporary and permanent impacts are shown on *Table 1*. Major project components include development of the substation, loop-in of the existing transmission line and upgrades to the existing distribution.

TABLE 1
PROJECT COMPONENTS AND IMPACTS

	Temporary Impact	Permanent Impact
Substation Pad and Access Driveways	– –	3.02 ac
Maintenance Access Road	– –	1.37 ac
Non-native Landscaping	– –	0.33 ac
Bare Ground Staging Area	0.37 ac	– –
Two New Steel Poles	0.04 ac	– –

Substation

As shown in *Figure 3*, the proposed substation at full buildout is planned to have 112 MVA capacity with four 28 MVA transformers, four tie lines and sixteen 12 kV circuits. The existing 69 kV tie line (TL 681) will be routed in and out of the proposed site underground. Substation

equipment will be low profile with a maximum height of approximately 14 feet. Access to the substation will be via Figure 3 Proposed Valley Center Substation

two 30-foot wide driveways from Vesper Road south to the substation, as well as a dirt access road off Vesper Road to the east of the substation to maintain the proposed underground transmission line duct bank. The substation perimeter wall will enclose an area approximately 200 feet by 260 feet. The wall will be 10 feet high and constructed of earth toned, split-face block to blend better with the surrounding area. *Figure 4* shows the equipment profile and the wall height. Landscaping will be installed with the initial development; and plants will be similar to the native and non-native plants, trees and bushes already in the area. The landscaping is shown on *Figure 3*. There will be two 20-foot wide sliding gates at the end of the driveway leading into the substation.

Transmission

As illustrated in *Figure 3*, the existing 69 kV Line 681 will be routed in and out of the proposed substation underground. The initial installation of the underground transmission duct package will require one 69 kV steel cable pole from the existing Tie line 681 along Valley Center Road. The ultimate installation will require one additional 69 kV steel cable pole along Valley Center Road and install a second underground duct package. The new steel cable pole will replace the existing 70-foot high wood pole located south of Valley Center Road. *Figure 3* provides the location of the new steel cable pole and *Figure 5* provides a profile of the new steel cable pole.

Distribution

The initial substation construction will include installation of two 12 kV distribution circuits to offload other circuits that now supply the Valley Center area from the Lilac and Rincon substations. Both new circuits will exit the substation via a new underground conduit system and cross under Vesper Road. The new circuits will transition to overhead lines via two PVC conduit risers and one new wood pole (*Figure 6*) located on the north side of Vesper Road across the street from the substation. The existing distribution pole line along Vesper Road, just west of the substation to Cole Grade Road, will be upgraded to double circuit capacity and new wood poles. All new wood poles for distribution circuits will be approximately 40 feet in height above ground. *Figure 7* illustrates existing as well as proposed distribution poles along Vesper Road. The upgrade distribution system will provide sufficient capacity for the two initial Valley Center substation circuits. All future 12 kV distribution circuits will likewise exit the substation underground and continue along overhead or underground routes as determined by future development.

Figure 4 Proposed Substation Profile

Figure 5 Steel Cable Pole

Figure 6 Proposed Distribution Riser Pole along Vesper Road

Figure 7 Existing and Proposed Distribution Pole Along Vesper Road

2.4 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Site development will conform to the "Guide Specifications for Earthwork" (*URS Greiner Woodward Clyde 1999*). The final grade of the site will be about one to two percent, for good drainage to the point of collection and disposal. The access drive to the station would also be rough graded at this time. Wall construction and underground 12 kV installation would then be performed on the substation property. After this phase is completed, the landscape and irrigation would be installed.

Following site development, actual construction of the substation equipment foundations will commence. This is the only activity within the substation enclosure until it becomes operational. Once the enclosure is completed, the major equipment is placed on their foundation and structures are anchored in their final position. The grounding grid installation follows and wiring the equipment controls and protection devices are performed concurrently. By this time, the foundation for the steel poles would be completed and the poles would be staged onsite. No electric service interruptions to customers in the area are expected as a result of the construction of the substation.

All construction equipment, vehicles, personnel and materials staging areas would be accommodated within the property lines of the proposed substation property. The existing bare ground staging area in the northwest corner of the site would be utilized for construction equipment while the substation pad is being constructed. This area would be revegetated upon the completion of construction.

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

It is anticipated that six to eight workers would be employed for the site development phase of the project and eight to fifteen workers during the balance of construction of the transmission, substation and distribution infrastructure until just prior to control wiring check-out and testing. At this stage of construction, approximately four to six electricians would be onsite. Final activities including final tie-ins and energizing the station would utilize about six to eight electricians and two to four engineers. Total construction time is expected to take nine months. The project's in-service date is anticipated to be June 2001.

TABLE 2
ESTIMATED VEHICLE TYPES AND DURATION OF USE

Vehicle Type	Estimated Number Required	Duration
Tractor	3	1.5 months
Scraper/Grader	2	1.5 months
Loader	2	1.5 months
Compactor	1	1.5 months
Crane	2 (during raising of wall panels)	1 month
	2 (to set steel pole and transformer)	2 days
Concrete trucks	4	1 month
Backhoe	2	2 months
Crew trucks	3	5 months
Boom truck	1	3 months
Pick-up truck	3	5 months
Personal vehicles	15	9 months

2.5 FACILITY OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The substation will be unmanned, and electric equipment within the substation also will be controlled automatically. The equipment can be controlled remotely from SDG&E's central operations facilities. The substation wall will be of sufficient height and texture to prevent unassisted and unauthorized entrance. The entrance gate will be locked and warning signage will be posted on the perimeter wall. Entry to an operational substation will be restricted to authorized
SDG&E personnel. Maintenance will include equipment testing, equipment monitoring and repair, as well as emergency and routine procedures for service continuity and preventive maintenance. It is anticipated that maintenance would require about four trips per year with a two to four-person crew. One pick-up truck with one troubleman could visit the station once per day.

Substation lighting will be provided by six 300-watt tungsten-quartz lamps. These lights are intended to provide safety lighting inside the station during emergency only when a troubleman may require night lighting. It is anticipated that these lights would not be used more than once a year. Otherwise, the only night lighting would consist of one 100-watt yellow, outside floodlight installed at the entry gate on a pole about seven feet above finished grade. The lamp housing will be adjusted to shine out and down. The light will be controlled by a dusk to dawn

timer and will remain on during the night hours.

2.6 MITIGATION MEASURES INCLUDED INTO THE PROJECT

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

General

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

Geotechnical

- Grading and construction standards based on the site-specific conditions identified in the Applicant's Geotechnical Report (*URS Greiner Woodward Clyde 1999*) will be incorporated into design and construction of the proposed facilities, including the following:

  - Project design will meet or exceed existing earthquake design standards.
  - Pole and substation construction will meet CPUC's General Order for seismic standards.
  - Grading and site preparation will adhere to the "Guide Specifications for Earthwork" provided in the geotechnical engineering study (*URS Greiner Woodward Clyde 1999*).

- All cut and fill slopes will be landscaped and erosion control will be employed during the construction phase, including the short-term use of sandbags, matting, mulch, berms, hay bales, or similar devices along all graded areas to minimize sediment transport.

Water

- Measures to control sedimentation and erosion will be employed during the construction phase to control erosion, including the short-term use of sandbags, matting, mulch, berms, hay bales, or similar devices along all graded areas to minimize sediment transport. The exact design, location and schedule of use for such devices will be determined pursuant to direction and approval by the County of San Diego through review of the proposed grading and construction plans.

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

Air Quality

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

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

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

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

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

Biological Resources

- Mitigation to reduce impacts to coastal sage scrub and sensitive species which generally breed and forage in coastal sage scrub will be in accordance with the SDG&E approved Subregional Natural Communities Conservation Program (NCCP) Plan.

Mitigation for permanent impacts include deducting credits at a 2:1 ratio from SDG&E's Conservation Bank in accordance with SDG&E's approved NCCP Plan and USFWS and CDFG requirements. Mitigation for temporary impacts will come in the form of reseeding impacted areas and a two-year monitoring program to determine success. If habitat enhancement is not successful, then deduction from SDG&E's Conservation Bank would be made for temporary impacts. Additionally, SDG&E will implement the protective measures described in the SDG&E NCCP (Operational Protocols, Chapter 7.1).

! In addition to the requirements of SDG&E's NCCP, should spring surveys conducted in accordance with NCCP and prior to construction determine the presence of the California gnatcatcher, then SDG&E will ensure that grading activities within coastal sage scrub habitat occur outside the gnatcatcher's breeding season.

! The coastal sage scrub impacted by the project provides potential habitat for the quino checkerspot butterfly. This species is not currently covered in SDG&E's NCCP. The project site is within the USFWS' formerly designated Potential Habitat Area where surveys were strongly recommended in the 1999 field season (USFWS 1999). If determined necessary by the new USFWS Potential Habitat Area due to be published in January 2000, SDG&E will implement the following mitigation measures.

– – If the USFWS Potential Habitat Area does not include the project site, then absence of the quino checkerspot can be concluded and no further measures are required.

– – If the USFWS Potential Habitat Area includes the project site, SDG&E will complete a habitat assessment. If vegetative and physiographic features consistent with quino checkerspot are present, the adult flight survey will be completed according to USFWS 2000 guidelines; i.e., weekly surveys for the period of the USFWS defined season. If no quino checkerspots are observed **and** the USFWS concludes that surveys for the season were adequate (e.g., butterflies emerged at reference sites), then absence can be concluded and no further measures are required.

– – If the quino checkerspot is found on the site, any take of the quino checkerspot will require a federal section 10(a)(1)(B) permit and preparation of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), which specifies all measures utilized to not appreciably reduce the survival and recovery of the quino checkerspot in the wild.

The following provides a range of measures that will be incorporated into the project should the quino checkerspot be present on the project site to ensure that project impacts are less than significant.

a. Onsite avoidance through project redesign to the extent feasible.
b. Onsite minimization of impacts through project redesign to the extent feasible.
c. Offsite mitigation will be implemented for permanent impacts by one of the following:

(1) Deduction of mitigation credits from a conservation bank pursuant to Chapter 7.4 Mitigation Credits of the SDG&E NCCP. For this option to be used, however, the conservation bank must have in-kind quino checkerspot credits available.

(2) Acquisition from an established quino checkerspot mitigation bank (e.g., Silverado Ranch in the Anza Valley, Riverside County) or other occupied quino habitat as approved by the USFWS. The amount of mitigation required would be determined through coordination with the USFWS.

(3) Habitat creation or enhancement. SDG&E is currently amending their NCCP to include the quino checkerspot butterfly as a covered species. Such an approach would be included as part of SDG&E's amended NCCP or the HCP and section 10(a)(1)(B) permit application and would be subject to review and approval by the USFWS.

Hazards

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

Visual Resources

! The substation perimeter wall will be 10 feet high designed to screen transformers, distribution circuits, and other facility improvements from view. It has been designed in accordance with the Valley Center Design Review Guidelines and approved by the Valley Center Design Review Board.

- The site will be landscaped at initial development of the station and will be done in accordance with the landscape concept plan designed in accordance with the Valley Center Deign Guidelines and approved by the Valley Center Design Review Board.

- During normal operation, night lighting will consist of only one 100-watt yellow, outside floodlight that will be installed at the entry gate on a pole about seven feet above finished grade. The lamp housing will be adjusted to shine out and down. Other substation lighting will be used during emergencies only.

Paleontological Resources

- A county-certified paleontologist will attend a pre-grading conference and establish procedures for surveillance and halting or redirection of work. If determined necessary by the paleontologist, onsite observation of grading activities, fossil evaluation, salvage and report of findings will also be conducted.

Traffic

- A traffic control plan will be prepared in accordance with the County of San Diego's traffic control guidelines and will address construction traffic at the intersection of Valley Center Road and Vesper Road as well as trenching activities across Valley Center Road. Traffic control on Vesper Road will include signage and flagmen when necessary to allow the heavy equipment to utilize Vesper Road. Trenching of the transmission line across two-lane Valley Center Road on the south side of the project site would require signage, flagmen, and lane restriction. The traffic control plan will also include provisions for coordinating with local emergency service providers regarding construction times and lane closures.

- SDG&E will obtain an encroachment permit from the County of San Diego for proposed trenching activities affecting County roads. This process will include submittal of project plans, review of plans by the County, possible revisions of the plans relative to concerns brought forth by the County of San Diego, and finally, issuance of the respective permit.

Noise

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

- Prior to commencement of construction, residences within 300 feet of the project site will be notified of the expected duration and times of construction.

Public Utilities

- SDG&E will coordinate the proposed project design, specifically proposed trenching activities, with responsible utilities to ensure that the project does not conflict with existing utilities and maintenance of those utilities.

SECTION 3.0
PROPOSED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT

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

1. **Aesthetics:** The substation has been designed in accordance with the Valley Center Design Review Guidelines and unanimously supported by the Design Review Board. Design and landscaping measures approved by the Design Review Board effectively reduce project long-term visual quality impacts to less than significant. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* and *Section 5.1, Aesthetics,* for further discussion.

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

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

4. **Biological Resources:** The proposed substation would be developed on a 13.07-acre site that is primarily in a natural state. The project would result in both temporary and permanent impacts to 3.7 acres of coastal sage scrub habitat and 0.65 acre of coastal sage scrub/chaparral transition habitat. The remaining portion of the site would be mostly unaffected by the project. While no sensitive species were observed on the site, coastal sage scrub generally provides breeding and foraging habitat for the federally-threatened California gnatcatcher and other sensitive wildlife and plant species.

Mitigation to reduce impacts to coastal sage scrub and sensitive species which generally breed and forage in coastal sage scrub will be in accordance with SDG&E's approved Section 10(a) permit and NCCP and USFWS and CDFG requirements. In addition to complying with the requirements of SDG&E's NCCP, measures are included to mitigate potential impacts to the federally endangered quino checkerspot butterfly as well as further reduce potential impacts to the California gnatcatcher. Implementation of these measures will reduce impacts to biological resources to less than significant. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* as well as *Section 5.4, Biological Resources,* for further discussion.

5. **Cultural Resources:** There is no potential for encountering important archaeological resources as a result of project construction. A literature review from the south Coastal Information Center and the San Diego Museum of Man, a field survey of the proposed impact area, and testing of one prehistoric site to determine site significance were conducted. Testing of newly recorded site (CA-SDI-15358) within the proposed area of impact, produced few artifacts and the site was identified as not significant and not eligible to the California Register. As Site CA-SDI-15358 is identified as not significant, no mitigation measures are required. See *Section 5.14, Cultural Resources,* for further discussion.

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

7. **Hazards:** The proposed project is not anticipated to generate hazardous materials; therefore, no significant impacts due to public hazards would occur. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* and *Section 5.7, Hazards,* for further discussion.

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

9. **Land Use:** The project site and design has been approved by the Valley Center

Community Planning Group and Design Review Board and is an allowed use under County of San Diego Zoning ordinance. Due to the small impact footprint, setbacks and the fact that the facility is unmanned and has received approval by both the Valley Center Planning Group and Design Review Board, the project is considered consistent with the Valley Center Community Plan, San Diego County General Plan and therefore would have a less than significant impact to existing and planned land use. Additionally, measures have been incorporated into the project design to reduce visual impacts to below a level of significance. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included into the Project* as well as *Section 5.9, Land Use and Planning,* for further discussion.

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

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

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

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

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

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

During construction, testing and energizing the station (approximately nine months), traffic will be generated by construction crews and equipment/material deliveries. It is expected that this short-term construction-related traffic would not create a

substantial impact on traffic volumes nor change traffic patterns in such a way that congestion and delay would be substantially increased on street segments or at intersections.

Access to the site during construction and operation of the substation would be from Vesper Road. Some traffic hazards could result on Vesper Road and at the intersection of Vesper Road and Valley Center Road during construction while slow-moving, heavy equipment access the site from Vesper Road. Additional impacts/hazards could occur from trenching across Valley Center Road. However, traffic control measures, in accordance with County of San Diego requirements, have been incorporated into the project to reduce traffic impacts resulting from construction to less than significant. See *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* as well as *Section 5.15, Transportation and Circulation,* for further discussion.

16. **Utilities and Service Systems:** No impacts to utilities and service systems would occur. See *Section 2.6, Mitigated Measures Included Into the Project*, as well as *Section 5.16, Utilities and Service Systems,* for further discussion.

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

SECTION 4.0
INITIAL STUDY/ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

PROJECT INFORMATION		
1.	Project title:	Valley Center Substation Project
2.	Lead agency name and address:	California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Energy Division, 505 Van Ness Avenue San Francisco, CA 94102
3.	Contact person and phone number:	Beth Shipley, Regulatory Analyst, Energy Division Tel: (415) 703-1729
4.	Project location:	Valley Center Road/Vesper Road east of Cole Grade Road in the unincorporated community of Valley Center in north-central San Diego County.
5.	Project sponsor's name and address:	San Diego Gas & Electric Company 101 Ash Street, San Diego, CA 9210
6.	General plan designation:	(17) Estate; (1) dwelling unit per 2 and 4 acres
7.	Zoning:	RR.5 Residential, 2-acre minimum lot size
8.	Description of project: (*Describe the whole action involved, including but not limited to later phases of the project, and any secondary, support, or offsite features necessary for its implementation. Attach additional sheets if necessary.*) The proposed project is the construction of a 112-megavolt ampere (MVA) substation with the loop-in of the existing 69 kilovolt (kV) transmission line. The proposed substation at full buildout is planned to be 112 MVA, with four 28-MVA transformers, four 69 kV tie lines, and sixteen 12 kV circuits. The existing 69 kV tie line TL681 would be routed in and out of the proposed substation underground. Access to the substation will be via two 30-foot wide driveways from Vesper Road south to the substation, as well as a dirt access road off of Vesper Road to the east of the substation to maintain the proposed underground transmission duct bank.	

PROJECT INFORMATION

9. Surrounding land uses and setting: Briefly describe the project's surroundings:

The proposed Valley Center Substation is located on a parcel which is 13.07 acres in size and triangular in shape. Currently, the site is in a relatively natural state, with some grading to bare ground existing at the northwest corner of the property. The surrounding rural community of Valley Center is characterized by farming, ranching, and animal husbandry. Lot sizes are generally two acres and larger, and commercial and industrial uses are of low intensity and designed to meet the needs of a rural community. Land uses in the immediate vicinity of the proposed substation are residential with some agricultural. Approximately one-quarter mile west of the project site, at the area surrounding the intersection of Valley Center Road and Cole Grade Road, are community-serving commercial, industrial and public uses, including a store, bank, gas station, post office, library and agricultural supply store. A community park, school, fire station, and a County road materials yard are located at the northeast corner of Valley Center Road and Cole Grade Road.

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required (*e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.*)

- Consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game pursuant to the U.S. Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act.
- County of San Diego Encroachment Permit

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

9 Aesthetics	9 Agricultural Resources	9 Air Quality
9 Biological Resources	9 Cultural Resources	9 Geology/Soils
9 Hazards & Hazardous Materials	9 Hydrology/ Water Quality	9 Land Use/Planning
9 Mineral Resources	9 Noise	9 Population/Housing
9 Public Services	9 Recreation	9 Transportation/Traffic

PROJECT INFORMATION	
9 Utilities/ Service Systems	9 Mandatory Findings of Significance

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

9 I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

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

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

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

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

Signature Date

Beth Shipley, Regulatory Analyst California Public Utilities Commission

Printed name	For

EXPLANATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXPLANATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM:

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

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

8. The explanation of each issue should identify:

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

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

9. This checklist has been adapted from the form in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, as amended effective January 1, 1999 and the additional provisions of the CPUC's Rule 17.1 for implementing CEQA.

	ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES *Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts* Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
1.	AESTHETICS – Would the project:				
	a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	9	:	9	9
	b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	9	:	9	9
	c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	9	:	9	9
	d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	9	9	:	9
2.	AGRICULTURE RESOURCES – In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:				
	a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	9	9	9	:
	b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	9	9	9	:
	c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	9	9	:	9
3.	AIR QUALITY – Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
	a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	9	:	9	9
	b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	9	:	9	9
	c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	9	:	9	9
	d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	9	9	:	9
	e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	9	9	:	9
4.	BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
	a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	9	:	9	9

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES *Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts* Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	9	:	9	9
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	9	:	9	9
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	9	9	:	9
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinance protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	9	:	9	9
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	9	9	:	9
5. CULTURAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	9	9	9	:
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	9	9	9	:
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	9	9	:	9
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	9	9	9	:
6. GEOLOGY AND SOILS – Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	9	9	9	:
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	9	:	9	9
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	9	9	:	9
iv) Landslides?	9	9	9	:
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	9	:	9	9
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	9	:	9	9

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES *Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts* Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	9	9	9	:
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	9	9	9	:
7. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS – Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	9	9	:	9
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	9	9	:	9
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	9	9	:	9
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	9	9	9	:
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	9	9	9	:
f) For project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	9	9	9	:
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	9	9	:	9
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	9	9	:	9
8. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY – Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	9	:	9	9
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	9	9	:	9
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or offsite?	9	9	:	9

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES *Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts* Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite?	9	9	:	9
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	9	9	:	9
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	9	9	:	9
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	9	9	9	:
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	9	9	:	9
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	9	9	:	9
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	9	9	9	:
9. LAND USE AND PLANNING – Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	9	9	:	9
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	9	:	9	9
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	9	9	:	9
10. MINERAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	9	9	9	:
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	9	9	9	:
11. NOISE – Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	9	9	:	9
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	9	9	:	9
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	9	9	:	9

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES *Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts* Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	9	9	:	9
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	9	9	9	:
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	9	9	9	:

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES *Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts* Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
12. POPULATION AND HOUSING – Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	9	9	:	9
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	9	9	9	:
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	9	9	9	:
13. PUBLIC SERVICES				
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	9	9	:	9
Police protection?	9	9	9	:
Schools?	9	9	9	:
Parks?	9	9	9	:
Other public facilities?	9	9	:	9
14. RECREATION				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	9	9	9	:
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	9	9	9	:
15. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC – Would the project:				
a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	9	9	:	9
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the County Congestion Management Agency for designated roads or highways?	9	9	:	9
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	9	9	9	:

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES *Refer to Section 5 for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts* Discussion of Environmental Impacts	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	9	:	9	9
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	9	9	:	9
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	9	9	9	:
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	9	9	9	:
16. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS – Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	9	9	9	:
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	9	9	9	:
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	9	9	:	9
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	9	9	:	9
e) Result in determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider/s existing commitments?	9	9	9	:
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	9	9	:	9
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	9	9	9	:
17. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE				
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	9	:	9	9
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	9	:	9	9
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	9	9	:	9

SECTION 5.0
DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The following provides a discussion of the environmental impacts that are anticipated to occur as a result of constructing the proposed Valley Center Substation project. This section provides a brief explanation for the answers provided in the Initial Study/Environmental Checklist.

5.1 AESTHETICS

a) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. There are no scenic vistas in the project area; however, the proposed substation site is adjacent to Valley Center Road. Valley Center Road is shown as a scenic highway corridor on the San Diego County Scenic Highway System map. The site is currently visible from motorists along Valley Center Road and Vesper Road as well as from neighboring residences and businesses. The closest residence with views of the site is located over 500 feet to the south of the proposed substation perimeter wall.

The overall visual environment is characteristic of the rural atmosphere of Valley Center exhibiting primarily residences, undeveloped land and agricultural uses. The site is in a relatively natural state, with some grading to bare ground existing at the northwest corner of the property.

Construction of the proposed project would cause short-term and long-term visual quality impacts to motorists, nearby residences and others within the project vicinity. Site preparation for construction would include clearing the project area of existing vegetation, landscaping, fences, pavement, etc. During construction, excavated materials may be stockpiled onsite. The staging area may require minor grading and/or removal of vegetation. This type of area is typically fenced and provides storage for heavy equipment, construction materials, and a mobile office. Short-term visual impacts directly related to these construction activities may be adverse, but due to their temporary nature, are not considered significant.

Long-term visual impacts include removal of mature vegetation and adverse changes in the existing visual setting due to grading impacts and views of permanent above-ground facilities. Much of the existing mature vegetation would remain and screening of the site with additional landscaping is proposed as part of the project. (see *Appendix C, Aesthetics*, for a more detailed discussion as well as for simulations of the proposed project). Therefore, the loss of mature vegetation is expected to have a less than significant impact to long-term visual quality.

Long-term visual impacts will occur due to grading and installation of permanent above-ground facilities associated with the project (the substation, two steel cable poles and upgrades to the distribution line).

The substation was designed in accordance with the Valley Center Design Review Guidelines and unanimously supported by the Valley Center Design Review Board. The substation has been set back approximately 100 feet from the centerline of Valley Center Road and about 200 feet from Vesper Road. The substation will require an area approximately 200 feet by 260 feet in size and will be enclosed by a perimeter wall to prevent views to the interior of the substation. The perimeter wall will be 10 feet high and constructed of earth tone, split-face block to better blend with the surrounding area. Screening of the substation with landscaping is also proposed as part of the project.

The existing 69 kV line will be routed in and out of the substation underground. The ultimate installation will require two steel cable poles along Valley Center Road. Views of the two new steel poles on the south side of Valley Center Road would be seen by both westbound and eastbound travelers on Valley Center Road. One steel pole would be initially installed to replace the existing wood pole, and a second steel pole would be installed upon full buildout. The new steel poles would be 13 feet higher than the existing wood poles and have more arms than the existing wood pole. Although taller, the new poles would be similar in nature to the existing poles along the south side of Valley Center Road and would not be considered a significant aesthetic alteration or impact.

The initial substation construction will include installation of two 12 kV distribution circuits to offload other circuits that now supply the Valley Center area from the Lilac and Rincon substations. Both new circuits will exit the substation via a new underground conduit system and cross under Vesper Road. The new circuits will transition to overhead lines via two PVC conduit risers and one new wood pole (*Figure 6*) located on the north side ofVesper Road across the street from the substation. The existing distribution pole line along Vesper Road, just west of the substation to Cole Grade Road will be upgraded to double current capacity and new wood poles. All new poles will be 40 feet in height. *Figure 7* illustrates existing as well as proposed distribution poles along Vesper Road. The new distribution poles would be similar in nature to the existing poles along the west side of Vesper Road and therefore would not substantially alter visual quality.

Design and landscaping measures have been incorporated into the project (see *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included into the Project*). These measures would make the project consistent with the visual consideration established for the Valley Center Community, thereby effectively reducing long-term visual quality impacts to less than significant (see *Appendix C, Aesthetics,* for a more detailed discussion as well as for simulations of the proposed project).

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

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. See *response 5.1-a*.

c) Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. See *response 5.1-a*.

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

Less than Significant Impact. Depending upon construction techniques and hours, new sources of light and glare may be present during project construction. However, due to the short-term nature of construction, any light or glare effects are anticipated to be less than significant.

During operation, shadows and glare are not expected to be a problem as project facilities would generally be constructed of non-reflective materials.

Night lighting will consist of one 100-watt yellow floodlight and be in conformance with lighting guidelines of the Valley Center Design Guidelines (County of San Diego 1990d). Other substation lighting would be used during emergencies only. Light and glare effects from night lighting associated with the project are therefore considered to be less than significant.

5.2 AGRICULTURE RESOURCES

a) Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

No Impact. The project site is listed as "X, Other Land" by the U.S. Department of Conservation (1996). This category is not considered a prime, unique, or important farmland.

b) Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

No Impact. The project site is not within an agricultural preserve and no active agricultural operations occur on the project site. Additionally, the site is zoned RR.5 residential.

c) Would the project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?

Less than Significant Impact. Implementation of the project would convert portions of the project site from vacant land to non-agricultural use. A small portion of the project site has been used in the past for agriculture as indicated by a few existing walnut trees in the southern portion of the site. The graded portion of the site has also been used as a temporary storage area by various nearby agricultural uses. No active agriculture operations however exist on the property and the property would not be considered active farmland. Development of the property from vacant land to substation use would not be a significant conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use. The introduction of the project (a substation) into an area containing rural residential and agricultural uses would not increase local economic activity and therefore is not anticipated to provide incentives to landowners to develop their property. Furthermore, the proposed project is set back approximately 100 feet from the closest agricultural activity and therefore is not anticipated to impact existing agricultural operations.

5.3 AIR QUALITY

a) Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The project site is located in the San Diego Air Basin, which is a federal and state non-attainment area for ozone (O_3), and a state non-attainment area for particulate matter less than or equal to 10 microns in diameter (PM_{10}). The applicable O_3 attainment plan is the Regional Air Quality Strategy (RAQS), which is prepared and administered by the San Diego Air Pollution Control District (APCD). The San Diego APCD has not established significance criteria for construction emissions. Federal guidelines relative to implementation of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments contain emission thresholds at levels that are presumed not to interfere with the attainment process for national clean air standards. They are applicable to both construction and operational activity emissions. On an average daily basis, the federal thresholds are:

ROG	–	275 pounds/day
NO_x	–	275 pounds/day
CO	–	550 pounds/day
PM_{10}	–	550 pounds/day

The proposed project is not expected to release any air emissions during operation. Construction emissions would come from heavy equipment exhaust, construction-related trips by workers, material hauling trucks, and associated fugitive dust generation from clearing and grading activities. Heavy construction equipment will be diesel-powered. The principal pollutants would be carbon dioxide (CO), volatile organic compounds (VOC), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and PM_{10}. VOC and Nox are the precursors of O_3. The emissions from construction equipment exhausts were estimated using emission factors indicated in the *CEQA Air Quality Handbook* prepared by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) and using anticipated equipment, engine sizes, operating hours and operating schedule for the construction activity (SDG&E December 30, 1999). *Table 3* provides estimated project construction emissions.

TABLE 3
CONSTRUCTION EMISSIONS

Total Emissions per Project Task	NO_x Daily lbs/day	CO Daily lbs/day	PM_{10} Daily lbs/day	SO_x Daily lbs/day	ROC Daily lbs/day
Site Development (Aug-Oct 2000: 3 mos.)	90.5	41	6.5	9.5	6.6
Substation, Below Grade (Nov-Dec 2000: 2 mos.)	80.6	35	4.7	8.3	4.4
Substation, Above Grade (Jan-May 2001: 5 mos.)	23.7	10	1.5	2.5	1.4
Distribution (Feb-mid May 2001: 3.5 mos.)	34.4	17	2.0	3.6	1.9
Transmission (Jan-3rd week of May, 2001: 4.75 mos.)	4.7	2	0.3	0.5	0.5
Project Total Construction Equipment Emissions	143.4	64.7	8.5	14.8	8.2
Fugitive Dust Emissions			53.0		

As shown in *Table 3*, total daily construction emissions are not anticipated to exceed identified significance thresholds and therefore are considered to be less than significant.

Additionally, measures to reduce fugitive dust impacts during construction as required by the APCD have been incorporated into the project (see *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included in the Project*). Therefore, short-term construction activities are expected to have a less than significant impact to air quality and the implementation of the RAQS.

b) Would the project violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. See *response 5.3-a*.

c) Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. Implementation of the project would result in short-term impacts to air quality associated with

construction. The cumulative effect of the proposed project and other projects in the vicinity would incrementally contribute to the San Diego Air Basin's inability to attain federal and state AAQS for O_3 and PM_{10}. It is anticipated that short-term cumulative effects to air quality due to construction activities can be mitigated to a level of less than significant through implementation of mitigation measures on a project-by-project basis designed to control construction generated particulate matter (PM_{10}) through dust abatement procedures in accordance with APCD rules and control construction-generated O_3 and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) through proper maintenance of construction vehicles and traffic management.

Operations of the proposed project would not generate air quality impacts. Therefore, the project would not contribute to long-term cumulative impacts to ambient air quality.

d) Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less than Significant Impact. The nearest sensitive receptor (residence) to the proposed site is located approximately 200 feet to the east of the project site property line and approximately 450 feet from the proposed substation wall. As discussed in *response 5.3-a*, the proposed project is not expected to release any air emissions during operation and short-term emissions during construction are expected to be less than significant. In addition, mitigation measures would further reduce impacts as discussed in *response 5.3-a*. Therefore, emissions associated with the proposed project are expected to have a less than significant impact to sensitive receptors.

e) Would the project create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?

Less than Significant Impact. Asphalt paving of the two access driveways and repaving of the trenched portion of Valley Center Road is proposed as part of the project. Asphaltic odor during paving may be considered unpleasant to some persons; however, perception of the odor would be short-term in nature and not considered a significant impact.

5.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

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

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed project site was surveyed for biological resources (KEA Environmental 1999 – see *Appendix D* to the MND).

The proposed project site is 13.07 acres in size and includes a total of eight vegetation communities onsite (*Figure 8*). The dominant vegetation is flat-topped buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*)-dominated Diegan coastal sage scrub, with other areas of coastal sage scrub/chaparral mix, chamise chaparral, Engelmann oak woodland, southern willow scrub, eucalyptus woodland with exotic trees, and bare ground.

Besides the flat-topped buckwheat, another common coastal sage scrub species occurring onsite is California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*). The dominant chaparral species includes chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*). Engelmann oak woodland is dominated by Engelmann oak (*Quercus engelmannii*) with some coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*).

Construction would result in both temporary and permanent impacts to 3.71 acres of coastal sage habitat and 0.65 acre of coastal sage scrub/chaparral transitional habitat. While no sensitive species were observed on the site, coastal sage scrub generally provides breeding and foraging habitat for the federally-listed threatened California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica*) as well as other sensitive wildlife and plant species, including orange-throated whiptail (*Cnemidophorus hyperythrus beldingi*), San Diego horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei*), northern red-diamond rattlesnake (*Crotalus ruber ruber*), and Orcutt's brodiaea (*Brodiaea orcuttii*). Mitigation for impacts to coastal sage scrub and sensitive species which may potentially breed and forage in coastal sage scrub will be in accordance with the SDG&E NCCP Plan. The CDFG and USFWS approved this Plan on December 18, 1995. As created, this Plan allows for "incidental take" of species covered under the Plan, under Section 10(a) of the U.S. Endangered Species Act and under Sections 2081 and 2800 et. seq. of the California Endangered Species Act. According to the

SDG&E Plan, "incidental take" of covered species is allowed for utility actions relating to maintenance and construction of new facilities.

Figure 8 Preferred Substation Biological Impact Map

Under the terms of the Plan, SDG&E will notify the resource agencies of the project and its potential impacts. Reporting will be in the form of an Environmental Field Survey which describes the project, location, existing habitat, impacts, recommendations to minimize impacts, and form of mitigation. More specifically, mitigation for temporary impacts will be reseeding impacted areas and a two-year monitoring program to determine success. Mitigation for permanent impacts will come in the form of a deduction from SDG&E's Conservation Bank at a 2:1 ratio. Additionally, SDG&E will implement the protective measures described in the SDG&E NCCP. Operational protocols (Chapter 7.1) of the SDG&E NCCP would be implemented and are incorporated into this document by reference.

In addition to the requirements of SDG&E's NCCP, should spring surveys conducted in accordance with the NCCP and prior to construction determine the presence of the California gnatcatcher, then SDG&E will ensure that grading activities within coastal sage scrub habitat occur outside the gnatcatcher's breeding season.

The coastal sage scrub impacted by the project provides potential habitat for the quino checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas editha quino*). This species is not currently covered in SDG&E's NCCP. The project site is within the USFWS' formerly designated Potential Habitat Area where surveys were strongly recommended in the 1999 field season (USFWS 1999). If determined necessary by the new USFWS Potential Habitat Area due to be published in January 2000, SDG&E will implement the following mitigation measures.

- If the USFWS Potential Habitat Area does not include the project site, then absence of the quino checkerspot can be concluded and no further measures are required.

- If the USFWS Potential Habitat Area includes the project site, SDG&E will complete a habitat assessment. If vegetative and physiographic features consistent with quino checkerspot are present, the adult flight survey will be completed according to USFWS 2000 guidelines; i.e., weekly surveys for the period of the USFWS defined season. If no quino checkerspots are observed **and** the USFWS concludes that surveys for the season were adequate (e.g., butterflies emerged at reference sites), then absence can be concluded and no further measures are required.

If the quino checkerspot is found on the site, any take of the quino checkerspot will require a federal section 10(a)(1)(B) permit and preparation of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), which specifies all measures utilized to not appreciably reduce the survival and recovery of the quino checkerspot in the wild.

The following provides a range of measures that will be incorporated into the project should the quino checkerspot be present on the project site to ensure that project impacts are less than significant.

a. Onsite avoidance through project redesign to the extent feasible.
b. Onsite minimization of impacts through project redesign to the extent feasible.
c. Offsite mitigation will be implemented for permanent impacts by one of the following:

(1) Deduction of mitigation credits from a conservation bank pursuant to Chapter 7.4 Mitigation Credits of the SDG&E NCCP. For this option to be used, however, the conservation bank must have in-kind quino checkerspot credits available.

(2) Acquisition from an established quino checkerspot mitigation bank (e.g., Silverado Ranch in the Anza Valley, Riverside County) or other occupied quino habitat as approved by the USFWS. The amount of mitigation required would be determined through coordination with the USFWS.

(3) Habitat creation or enhancement. SDG&E is currently amending their NCCP to include the quino checkerspot butterfly as a covered species. Such an approach would be included as part of SDG&E's amended NCCP or the HCP and section 10(a)(1)(B) permit application and would be subject to review and approval by the USFWS.

Mitigation measures as identified above are anticipated to reduce impacts to candidate, sensitive, or special status species to less than significant.

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

Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. The southern willow scrub onsite is dominated by willows (*Salix* sp.) in association with mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*). The eucalyptus woodland is dominated by several species of eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* spp.) and the exotic trees include walnuts (*Juglans* sp.), pines (*Pinus* sp.) and pepper trees (*Schinus* sp.). The southern willow scrub area located at the southern tip of the project site is approximately 0.06 acre in size. It meets the California Department of Fish and Game criteria for wetlands and would most likely be considered jurisdictional by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The design of the project is such that no direct impacts to wetland resources would occur. However, this area of the project site would be near the proposed undergrounded transmission line extending north from Valley Center Road. Best management practices for erosion control would be implemented prior to trenching and construction of the transmission line to avoid siltation to the nearby southern willow scrub (see *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project*). Operational protocols (Chapter 7.1 of SDG&E's NCCP) implemented pursuant to the SDG&E NCCP would further avoid siltation impacts to the nearby southern willow scrub.

c) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated. See *response 5.4-b.*

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

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project consists of above and below ground facilities that will not have a significant effect on wildlife corridors and habitat linkages. The project consists of a linear below-ground structure (i.e., underground transmission) that would have no permanent effect on wildlife

movement and limited above-ground facilities (i.e., substation and transmission/ distribution improvements). Because of their size, use and location in areas that are not likely to constitute important wildlife movement sites, the proposed project is not anticipated to disrupt use of wildlife corridors and linkages.

e) Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinance protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated. Two sensitive tree species exist onsite, including Engelmann oak and coast live oak. Engelmann oak is designated locally sensitive by the County of San Diego. No Engelmann oaks would be impacted and one coast live oak would be indirectly impacted by trenching of the transmission line along the perimeter of the coast live oak root zone. Trenching is not anticipated to impact the root zone of the coast live oak. However, should impacts occur, SDG&E will transplant this oak or replace at a ratio of 1:1 onsite, thereby reducing impacts to less than significant.

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

Less than Significant Impact. The project site is within the north San Diego County Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) planning area. The County of San Diego is in the process of preparing a Subregional Plan in conformance with the MSCP for the northern San Diego County to ensure the long-term survival of the gnatcatcher and other sensitive coastal sage scrub-dependent plant and animal species in accordance with state-sanctioned NCCP program guidelines, as well as other species and habitats in the region. Several reserve concepts currently are being analyzed. The Valley Center Substation site area is, however, designated as low quality habitat under the MSCP and therefore, it is anticipated that the project would not conflict with any reserve scenario of the San Diego County MSCP Subregional Plan.

5.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5?

No Impact. A cultural resources survey was performed for the proposed project site (KEA Environmental 1999) and is provided as *Appendix E*. A literature review from the South Coastal Information Center and the San Diego Museum of Man, a field survey of the proposed impact area, and testing of one prehistoric site to determine site significance were conducted. Testing of newly recorded site (CA-SDI-15358) within the proposed area of impact produced few artifacts and the site was identified as not significant and not eligible to the California Register. As Site CA-SDI-15358 is identified as not significant, no mitigation measures are required. Site CA-SDI-15358 has been recorded on the appropriate DPR form, and as stated in the cultural resource report, artifacts collected will be curated at the San Diego Archaeological Center. No other evidence of historic resources was detected and no impacts to historic resources would be expected from project implementation.

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

No Impact. Please refer to *response 5.5-a.* The cultural resources survey performed for the site (KEA Environmental 1999) revealed one prehistoric archaeological site consisting of a low density lithic scatter with associated bedrock milling features. A subsurface testing program was conducted and it was determined that the site did not meet criteria under §15064.5, as no subsurface deposit was identified during the testing program. Cultural materials were limited to the artifacts collected from the surface and two milling features. All of the identified artifacts were collected, and the milling features were sketched, photographed, and recorded. The potential for this site to address regional research issues has been exhausted. Therefore, project implementation would not impact an archaeological resource.

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

Less than Significant. Due to the limited area to be disturbed and minimal depth to ground surface disturbance, the potential for encountering important paleontological resources is considered to be low. However, in order to ensure that impacts do not occur to important paleontological resources, a County-certified paleontologist will review and if necessary, observe grading activities.

d) Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

No Impact. Based on the results of the cultural resources survey performed for the

site, which included Native American consultation, no disturbance of human remains is expected.

5.6 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

a) Would the project expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury or death involving:

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

No Impact. A geotechnical investigation has been prepared for the project (*URS Greiner Woodward-Clyde 1999*). Based on a review of this report, there are no known active faults located in the project vicinity. Therefore, the potential for fault rupture is considered extremely low.

ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The project site will likely be subject to ground shaking in response to either a local moderate or more distant large magnitude earthquake. As described in *Section 2.6* of this MND, project design has incorporated the following measures to reduce geological hazards due to seismic groundshaking to less than significant.

- Project design will meet or exceed existing earthquake design standards.
- Pole and substation construction will meet CPUC's General Order for seismic standards.
- Project design will adhere to the "Guide Specifications for Earthwork" provided in the geotechnical engineering study (*URS Greiner Woodward-Clyde 1999*).

iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less than Significant Impact. Design of the substation was based on probabilistic evaluation of ground shaking from all faults in the area. Geologic conditions onsite are not conducive to liquefaction. The site has moderate to gentle slopes underlain by granitic rock.

iv. Landslides?

No Impact. Landslides are not present on or adjacent to the site (*URS Greiner Woodward-Clyde 1999*).

b) Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. Clearing and grading of the site for project construction would result in the potential to increase erosion onsite. All cut and fill slopes would be landscaped and erosion control will be employed during the construction phase, including the short-term use of sandbags, matting, mulch, berms, hay bales, or similar devices along all graded areas to minimize sediment transport. The exact design, location and schedule of use for such devices will be determined pursuant to direction and approval by the San Diego County (see *Section 2.6, Mitigated Measures Included Into the Project*).

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

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. This site is occupied by residual soils, variably weathered granitic rock, and localized colluvial deposits. The granitic rock has been described as Bonsall Tonalite (*URS Greiner Woodward-Clyde 1999*). Adherence to the "Guide Specifications for Earthwork" provided in the geotechnical engineering study (*URS Greiner, Woodward-Clyde 1999*) including recommended fill compaction and site preparations for the project would reduce any potential geologic impacts to below a level of significance.

d) Would the project be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks of life or property?

No Impact. The residual soils and weathered granitic rock that are present in the northern portion of the site are sandy clay to clayey sand with localized rock fragments. These materials may be moderately expansive, but in general are present as a relatively thin surficial layer of approximately six inches to two feet thick (*URS Greiner Woodward-Clyde 1999*). This material would be over-excavated to a depth of four to five feet and replaced with select fill. No impact from expansive soil is expected.

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

No Impact. No sewer or wastewater disposal is required as part of the project.

5.7 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

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

Less than Significant Impact. The only hazardous material that would be used in operation of the substation is transformer oil. Hazardous wastes would be produced during maintenance and operation activities and would primarily include used oil and oil saturated materials. This would be an increase over current hazardous material use and production of hazardous waste onsite, but would not be a significant hazard. Aboveground, concrete containment basins would be constructed around the transformers to contain the oil in the event of a spill. Transformer oil would not be stored onsite, but at SDG&E's central maintenance facility in San Diego. Hazardous wastes generated from maintenance and operation activities would be transported to SDG&E's central maintenance facility for disposal. All use of hazardous materials and disposal of hazardous wastes would be in compliance with state Title 22 and federal Title 40 requirements, including the oil spill control and countermeasure plan (SCCP) required by Title 40 CFR Section 112.7. No extraordinary risk of accidental explosion or the release of hazardous substances is anticipated with development and implementation of the proposed substation.

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

Less than Significant Impact. A site assessment report for the project site was prepared for the project site (Vista Information Solutions 1998) and the project site was not listed on any federal, state, or local databases of hazardous materials or hazardous waste sites. Because there is no known existing sources of health hazards on the site, exposure of people to existing health hazards is not anticipated. Please refer to *response 5.7-a*. Also please refer to *Section 6.0* of this

document for a discussion on electric magnetic fields (EMF).

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

Less than Significant Impact. Please refer to *response 5.7-a* and *5.7-b*. The nearest school exists on Cole Grade Road, north of Valley Center Road, slightly greater than one-quarter mile (0.3 mile) northwest of the project site.

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

No Impact. A site assessment report for the project site was prepared for the project site (Vista Information Solutions 1998) and the project site was not listed on any federal, state, or local databases of hazardous materials or hazardous waste sites.

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

No Impact. The project site is not located within an airport land use plan area nor within two miles of an airport.

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

No Impact. No private airstrips exist within the vicinity of the project site.

g) Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less than Significant Impact. Some traffic hazards would occur during construction activities which could interfere with emergency response plans or evacuation plans (see *response 5.15-d*). However, with proper traffic control, construction activities would have a less than significant impact to emergency or emergency evacuation plans.

h) Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

Less than Significant Impact. The project is an unnamed facility and development of the substation pad would remove all flammable vegetation in a 200-foot by 260-foot area. The pad would be cleared, graded, paved, and then surrounded by a 10-foot high masonry wall and gunite drainage ditches. No vegetation is proposed within the walled area. Consequently, the addition of the substation to the project site is not anticipated to increase the fire hazard in the area and therefore, impacts related to increased fire hazard due to the substation will remain below a level of significance.

Although energized lines that fall to the ground would be automatically de-energized by protective relays, the possibility of a brush fire still exists. Because the project basically involves the addition of underground lines and the replacement of existing overhead lines with new lines, the potential for brush fires ignited by power lines would remain unchanged. Therefore, impacts related to increased fire hazard due to power lines are anticipated to be below a level of significance.

5.8 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

a) Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The project will result in permanent and temporary impacts as shown in *Table 1*, provided in *Section 2.3* of this MND.

During construction grading, there is the potential for some short-term erosion to occur and discharge of pollutants, especially during wet weather seasons. Measures to control erosion and discharge of pollutants, such as sandbagging or other means of stabilization or impoundment will be employed during construction in conformance with County of San Diego standards (see *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project)*. Implementation of these measures will reduce surface water quality impacts during project construction to less than significant.

The project includes gunite ditches surrounding the substation pad. Runoff from

the project site would be conveyed in the proposed gunite ditches and empty to energy dissipation structures to the natural drainage course. Design and construction of these drainage structures would be in conformance with County of San Diego to assure that water quality standards and waste discharge requirements would not be violated.

b) Would the project substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of a local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project involves only surface or near-surface improvements which should have no effect on groundwater flows, quantities, or quality. The project also does not involve any groundwater withdrawals or additions.

The project would result in approximately 1.4 acres of additional impervious area (including the substation pad and two access driveways). This additional impervious area would have a less than significant impact on groundwater recharge.

c) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on or offsite?

Less than Significant Impact. See *response 5.8-a and 5.8-b*. Runoff from the project site would be conveyed in the proposed gunite ditches and empty to energy dissipation structures to the natural drainage course. These channeled drainages would not involve alteration of natural drainage courses nor substantially increase velocities so as to increase erosion or siltation.

d) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on or offsite?

Less than Significant Impact. Proposed improvements would not substantially

change the existing water drainage flow in the area and would not result in flooding on or offsite (see *response 5.8-c*).

e) Would the project create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

Less than Significant Impact. See *response 5.8-a, 5.8-b and 5.8-c.*

f) Would the project otherwise degrade water quality?

Less than Significant Impact. See *response 5.8-a.* No other degradation of water quality would result from project implementation.

g) Would the project place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary of Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?

No Impact. No housing is proposed by the project.

h) Would the project place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?

Less than Significant Impact. The southeastern corner of the project site is within the 100-year floodplain of an unnamed drainage to Keys Creek which primarily flows on the south side of Valley Center Road (County of San Diego 1990b). Portions of the proposed underground transmission line and access road would be within the limits of the 100-year floodplain. The access road would be at the existing grade. Consequently, neither the underground transmission line nor the access road would impede or redirect flood flows.

i) Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?

Less than Significant Impact. See *response 5.8-h.* All above-ground structures would be placed outside of the 100-year floodplain and therefore there is no direct risk of exposing structures to flooding hazards. Additionally, given that drainage

improvements will be incorporated into the project, the potential for the project to cause water-related hazards to people or property is considered to be less than significant.

j) Would the project be susceptible to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?

No Impact. Hydrologic and topographic conditions of the project site and surrounding area do not lend themselves to these conditions. The proposed project is not near any water body. Slopes onsite and in the vicinity are gradual, so mudflows would be unlikely.

5.9 LAND USE AND PLANNING

a) Would the project physically divide an established community?

Less than Significant Impact: The project site is 13.07 acres in size and currently is in a relatively natural state with some grading to bare ground at the northwestern corner of the property. The site is bordered by Vesper Road to the north and Valley Center Road to the west and south and is located within a transition area between residential, light industrial and commercial. Residences and undeveloped land exist to the west and east. Agricultural uses exist to the north and south. Offices of the Valley Center Municipal Water District are located to the northwest. Current land uses are shown in *Figure 9*. As illustrated in *Figure 9*, the closest residence to the proposed substation perimeter wall is approximately 450 feet to the east. The closest commercial use is located across Vesper Road to the north approximately 400 feet from the proposed substation perimeter wall. Only the north half of the parcel (approximately 3.02 acres or 23% of the site) would be impacted by the development of the substation itself and access driveways. The south half would be mostly unaffected by the project except for being crossed by the underground transmission line and a portion of the maintenance access road.

The project site and design has been approved by the Valley Center Community Planning Group and Design Review Board and is an allowed use under County of San Diego Zoning ordinance. Due to the small impact footprint, setbacks and the fact that the facility is unmanned and has received approval by both the Valley Center Planning Group and Design Review Board, the project is considered consistent with the Valley Center Community Plan, San Diego County General

Plan and therefore would not disrupt or divide the existing community (see *response 5.9-b*).

Figure 9 Current Land Uses

b) Would the project conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. Local General Plan and Zoning Policies, as they relate to the project site, are summarized below. It should be noted, however, that the CPUC has exclusive jurisdiction over the proposed project. Therefore, the project is not subject to local or county plans, policies, or zoning regulations. The CPUC is however required to consider local land use regulations and policies when making decisions. The following data are presented, therefore, to assist in determining land use compatibility.

San Diego County General Plan

Valley Center has its own Community Plan (adopted December 1974, amended December 19990) which constitutes the Valley Center portion of the County of San Diego's General Plan. The project has been proposed to provide reliable electrical service for planned growth as envisioned by the Valley Center Community Plan.

The Valley Center Community Plan has several goals and policies for current and future development. The substation project is consistent with the Public Facilities and Services Goal, from the Valley Center Community Plan, by SDG&E adopting an active program of coordination with the Community Planning Group and Design Review Board to ensure allowable growth of the population and the infrastructure serving it. The Valley Center Substation is required in order to serve planned growth outlined in the County of San Diego's General Plan.

Approved and planned projects in the vicinity include the widening of Valley Center Road west of Cole Grade Road, the widening of Cole Grade Road north of Valley Center Road, and the construction of a park and senior center at the location of the County maintenance Yard on the north side of Valley Center Road, east of Cole Grade Road. The proposed substation would support growth in the area as envisioned by the Valley Center Community Plan, which includes additional commercial and industrial development along Valley Center Road and Cole Grade Road.

As discussed in *Appendix B* to this MND, SDG&E worked closely with the Valley Center Community Planning Group and Design Review Board in selecting the project site and in designing the project. The project received approval from the Valley Center Planning Group in December 1998. The substation was designed in accordance with the Valley Center Design Review Guidelines and unanimously supported by the Design Review Board. SDG&E worked with the Design Board and Community Planning Group to ensure the substation project followed the Conservation Goals outlined in the Community Plan, and therefore is considered to be consistent with the adopted plans, policies and goals of the Valley Center Community Plan, San Diego County General Plan.

County of San Diego Zoning Ordinance

Valley Center does not have its own zoning ordinance. It follows the County of San Diego's Zoning Ordinance. The proposed site is zoned RR.5, a designated residential land use. Section 1300, Section 1355, and Section 2104(a) from the County of San Diego's Zoning Ordinance (effective 12/19/78) are relevant to this project and demonstrate that public utilities, such as substations, support local jurisdiction's goals and policies. Section 1300 provides a general definition of civic use types allowed in the County of San Diego. It states that civic uses include the performance of utility uses that are strongly vested with public or social importance. Section 1355 defines minor impact utilities, such as substations, as necessary to provide essential services. Section 2104(a) identifies utilities as a permitted use in residential areas within the County of San Diego. Placement of the proposed substation within the residential zone would be considered a "minor impact utility" use and is consistent with similar substations, such as the Lilac and Rincon substations which currently serve the Valley Center community.

The proposed substation is located in a transition area between the Light Industrial, Public/Semi-Public, Commercial and Residential uses, as shown in *Figure 10*. While placement of the proposed substation in a residential zone may be viewed as a conflict with certain policies of the County's Zoning Ordinance, this impact is considered to be less than significant for the following reasons:

- Development of the proposed project in a residential zone is an allowed use under the County's Zoning Ordinance.

- The project as proposed was approved by the Valley Center Community Planning Group and therefore, it is anticipated that it would not

significantly conflict with existing and planned land use or community character.

Figure 10 Zoning

- The proposed substation location is in a transition area between residential, light industrial and commercial. The closest residence would be located approximately 450 feet east of the substation perimeter wall.

- The project includes setbacks, design features and landscaping approved by the Valley Center Design Review Board to ensure land use compatibility as identified in the Valley Center Community Plan.

c) Would the project conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?

Less than Significant Impact. Please refer to *response 5.4-f.*

5.10 MINERAL RESOURCES

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

No Impact. No known mineral resources are known for the project site.

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

No Impact. See *response 5.10-a*.

5.11 NOISE

a) Would the project result in exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

Less than Significant Impact. Construction and operation of the proposed project would result in an increase in existing noise levels due to construction equipment and operation of transformers. The proposed project is located in a rural area within the County of San Diego. The County of San Diego Noise Ordinance

places limits on noise generated by stationary sources. The noise level limits are specified in A-weighted decibels [dB(A)] at the boundary of the property. For rural residential properties, the noise ordinance specifies a daytime limit of 50 dB(A) and a nighttime limit of 45 dB(A).

The noise ordinance also sets specific limits on construction activities. Construction is governed by Section 36.410 of the ordinance, which limits the hours of construction on Monday through Saturday, 7 AM to 7 PM, and prohibits construction on Sundays and holidays. This section of the ordinance also limits construction noise at or within any developed or used residential property, to a maximum of 75 dB(A) for a period of eight hours.

Construction Noise: Construction will occur within the limits described above (Monday through Saturday, 8 AM to 7 PM and will not exceed 75 dB(A) for a period of eight hours within any residential property.

Short-term construction noise impacts tend to occur in discrete phases dominated initially by site clearing and grading, then by foundation construction, and finally by building and facility construction. It is anticipated that heavy duty equipment (Caterpillar D-9 dozer or equivalent or larger) will be able to excavate most of the site; however, blasting may be necessary in zones of non-rippable rock. If blasting is required, it is expected that it would only occur once or twice. Blasting noise is typically no louder than construction equipment and the sound is generally perceived as a dull thud, rather than as a loud explosion.

The nearest residence to the proposed site is approximately 200 feet to the east and 450 feet from the proposed substation perimeter wall. The earth-moving (grading) activities are the noisiest sources during construction, with equipment noise ranging from 70 to 95 dB(A) at 50 feet from the source. For point sources such as construction equipment, noise decreases by approximately 6 dB for each doubling of distance for a hard, flat site (no topography). Rolling topography, such as is found onsite and surrounding the site, provides some noise attenuation.

Consequently, noise levels from quieter construction noise sources are expected to be below 75 dB(A) at the nearest residence to the site. However, intermittent noise levels from the louder construction equipment may be approximately 75 dB(A), 500 feet from the source. Since the County's noise ordinance specifies a maximum average of 75 dB(A) for a period of eight hours, it is anticipated that project construction would not exceed County noise standards.

Construction of the substation would only occur during weekday daytime hours. Nocturnal noise generating construction activities would be expected to occur only if emergency operations are necessary. Noise generated during construction activities would be short-term in nature, limited to daylight hours, and would not exceed County noise ordinance standards and therefore are considered to be less than significant.

Operational Noise: Operation of the proposed facilities would result in the production of long-term noise from transformers. Each transformer would generate a maximum sound level of 61 dB(A) (SDG&E, PEA September 1999).

The County's noise ordinance specifies a noise level of 50 dB(A) at the property line as the acceptable limit during the daytime hours and a nighttime limit of 45 dB(A). For point sources such as transformers, noise decreases by approximately 3 dB for each doubling of distance for a hard, flat site with no topography. All maximum calculated values at 11 different locations along the perimeter of the proposed project site were less than 40 dB(A) (SDG&E, PEA September 1999). It should be noted that the calculations did not take into account topography or the fact that the transformers would be surrounded by a 10-foot high masonry block wall. Therefore, noise from substation operation would comply with County of San Diego noise standards and are considered to be less than significant.

b) Would the project result in exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less than Significant Impact. Blasting during construction would generate vibrations near the source. Blasting would occur only once or twice. Blasting will be performed by a state-licensed professional, as defined in the California Administrative Code to ensure that blasting is in conformance with all state, County and municipal ordinances and therefore, vibration associated with blasting is anticipated to be less than significant.

c) Would the project result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

Less than Significant Impact. See *response 5.11-a*.

d) Would the project result in a substantial temporary of periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

Less than Significant Impact. See *response 5.11-a*.

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

No Impact. No airport exists within two miles of the project.

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

No Impact. No private airstrip exists within two miles of the project.

5.12 POPULATION AND HOUSING

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

Less than Significant impact. SDG&E provides electrical power services to the Valley Center area of the County of San Diego. A 1999 SDG&E load forecast has revealed that the two substations currently serving the Valley Center area will be overloaded by 2001. Additionally, the Valley Center Community Plan (1990 Amendment) provides for approximately 28 MW of future growth. The substation has been proposed to meet expected electrical growth as outlined in the Valley Center Community Plan and meet reliability criteria. No portion of the project would result in the generation of additional population. The project will not provide additional long-term employment opportunities. No residences are proposed as part of the proposed project, and no extension of services beyond that currently planned for is associated with the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would not generate additional population or cumulatively exceed official regional or local population projections, nor would it induce substantial growth in an area either directly or indirectly.

b) Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. No housing will be displaced or otherwise affected by the proposed project.

c) Would the project displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. See *response 5.12-b*.

5.13 PUBLIC SERVICES

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

i. Fire protection?

Less than Significant Impact. See *response 5.12-h* regarding the project's impact to fire hazard. There is the potential for an increase in fire response to the project site if neighboring residences see an incident at the project site, such as sparking, that may cause the neighbor to call the local fire department. SDG&E has an agreement with the fire department within their service area to immediately call SDG&E if they receive a call regarding one of SDG&E's properties. This is so that SDG&E can meet the fire department at the site and assess the situation on how to proceed prior to the fire department entering a high voltage area. This would be an infrequent occurrence and would not be an impact to fire protection services.

ii. Police protection?

No impact. As discussed under *response 5.12-a*, the proposed project would not generate population growth; therefore, no new demand would be

placed on police protection.

iii. Schools?

No impact. As discussed under *response 5.12-a*, the proposed project would not generate population growth; therefore, no new demand would be placed on schools.

iv. Parks?

No Impact. The proposed substation would be an unmanned facility and no population increase would result with project implementation. There would be no increase in the demand for parks or other recreational facilities.

v. Other public facilities?

Less than Significant Impact. As discussed under *response 5.12-a*, the proposed project would not generate population growth; therefore, no new demand would be placed on public facilities. Heavy trucks used during construction and maintenance of project facilities may result in a minimal increase in the need for roadway maintenance.

5.14 RECREATION

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

No Impact. As discussed under *response 5.12*-a, no population would be generated by the proposed project. Therefore, no demand for recreational facilities would occur.

b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

No Impact. No recreational facilities are included or would be required as part of

the proposed project.

5.15 TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

a) Would the project cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?

Less than Significant Impact. During operation, the proposed project is expected to generate approximately one or two vehicle trips per day. This limited number of vehicle trips would result in less than significant impacts to traffic or traffic congestion.

During construction, testing and energizing the station (approximately nine months), traffic will be generated by construction crews and equipment/material deliveries. Required equipment for site development include one tractor/dozer (6 weeks), two scrapers (6 weeks), one compactor (6 weeks), two water trucks (6 weeks), one blade/grader (6 weeks), two backhoes (8 weeks), five dump trucks (1 week), one concrete truck (1 week), and three pick-up trucks (8 weeks). Construction equipment required for the substation wall will include one backhoe (1 week), one loader (1 week), one compactor (1 week), one water truck (1 week), two concrete trucks (4 weeks), one forklift (1 month) and three pick-up trucks (5 weeks).

It is anticipated that six to eight workers would be employed onsite during the non-electrical phase of site preparation when grading, wall construction and installation of underground conduit would take place. Following this site preparation phase, approximately eight workers could be onsite during the balance of construction of the transmission, substation, and distribution infrastructure until just prior to control wiring checkout and testing. Final activities, including final tie-ins and energizing the station, would utilize about six to eight electricians and two to four engineers.

All construction equipment, vehicles, personnel and material staging areas would be accommodated within the property lines of the proposed substation property. Access to the property would be from Vesper Road and Valley Center Road. It is expected that this short-term construction-related traffic would not create a substantial impact on traffic volumes nor change traffic patterns in such a way that congestion and delay would be substantially increased on street segments or

at intersections.

b) Would the project exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the County Congestion Management Agency for designated roads or highways?

Less than Significant Impact. See *response 5.15-a*-and *5.15-d*. Short-term and limited construction-related traffic would not create a substantial impact on traffic volumes nor change traffic patterns in such a way as to affect the level of service (LOS) or vehicle to congestion ratio on study area roadways.

c) Would the project result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?

No Impact. No airport exists within two miles of the project; therefore, the proposed project would not result in an alteration to aircraft traffic or safety risks.

d) Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves of dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. Access to the site during construction and operation of the substation would be from Vesper Road. Some traffic hazards could result on Vesper Road and at the intersection of Vesper Road and Valley Center Road during construction while slow-moving, heavy equipment access the site from Vesper Road. Additional impacts/hazards could occur from trenching across Valley Center Road. A traffic control plan will be included as part of the proposed project. The traffic control plan will be prepared in accordance with the County of San Diego's traffic control guidelines and will address construction traffic at the intersection of Valley Center Road and Vesper Road as well as trenching activities across Valley Center Road. Traffic control on Vesper Road will include signage and flagmen when necessary to allow the heavy equipment to utilize Vesper Road. Trenching of the transmission line across two-lane Valley Center Road on the south side of the project site would require signage, flagmen, and lane restriction. It is envisioned that trenching activities would take two days, with one day to trench and repave one lane of Valley Center Road, and the following day to trench and repave the other lane. With proper traffic control approved by the County of San Diego Engineering Department (the jurisdiction issuing an encroachment permit for construction in County roadways), construction traffic impacts would be less than significant. Upon completion of construction, no traffic impact would result from operation of the project (see

response 5.15-a).

e) Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?

Less than Significant Impact. See *response 5.15-d*. The project will not close access to any property or existing roads; therefore, less than significant impacts to emergency access or access to nearby uses are expected due to the project.

f) Would the project result in inadequate parking capacity?

No Impact. Parking areas onsite are sufficient to accommodate construction and operation of the proposed project. Therefore, no impacts to parking capacity onsite or offsite would occur due to the project.

g) Would the project conflict with adopted policies, plans or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?

No Impact. Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with adopted policies or involve elimination of facilities supporting alternative transportation such as bus turnouts or bicycle racks.

5.16 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

a) Would the project exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?

No Impact. Project implementation would not impact wastewater treatment. Sewer is not required nor part of the proposed project.

b) Would the project require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which would cause significant environmental effects?

No Impact. No water or wastewater treatment facilities would be required as part of the proposed project. Landscaping is designed to be low water use and become naturalized after irrigation for two or three growing seasons.

c) Would the project require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Less than Significant Impact. Development of the project site would result in approximately 1.4 acres of additional impervious area and would not significantly increase impervious areas within the local drainage basin. Drainage improvements would be engineered to accommodate minor flows from the project and impacts would not be significant so as to require or alter offsite drainage systems. See *response 5.8-a*.

d) Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?

Less than Significant Impact. Short-term water provision by water trucks would be required during project construction for dust suppression, and would not be an impact to regional water treatment or water distribution facilities. Landscaping is designed to be low water use and become naturalized after irrigation for two to three growing seasons and therefore is not anticipated to impact water supplies. No other water system is proposed or needed implement the project.

e) Would the project result in determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider/s existing commitments?

No Impact. No wastewater treatment would be required by the proposed unmanned substation.

f) Would the project be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?

Less than Significant Impact. The project will generate a limited amount of solid waste during construction. It is anticipated that the solid waste generated by project construction would have a less than significant impact on local solid waste facilities. No regular solid waste disposal is proposed as part of the substation project. Wastes produced at the substation by maintenance and repair activities would be transported back to the central SDG&E maintenance facility in San Diego for disposal. The amount of solid waste generated by the proposed substation would not be substantial or interfere with the sufficient permitted capacity of

nearby landfills.

g) Would the project comply with federal, state, and local statues and regulations related to solid waste?

No Impact. See *response 5.16-f*. All solid waste will be disposed of in an approved site in compliance with federal, state and county regulations.

It should also be noted that California law now requires a 50 percent reduction by the year 2005 in solids requiring disposal, through composting, recycling, and reducing the generation of solid wastes. It is assumed that, as part of the construction plan for the project, a substantial portion of waste vegetation would be recycled and used for mulch/compost on the site. Therefore, much of the waste generated by the project may not require disposal in a county solid waste landfill. This would further decrease the negligible impact of the project on solid waste capacity.

5.17 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

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

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. As discussed in *response 5.5-a* and *5.5-b*, the project would cause no impacts to archaeological resources; however, as discussed in *response 5.4*-a, the project would cause impacts to biological resources.

The proposed substation would be developed on a 13.07-acre site that is primarily in a natural state. The project would result in both temporary and permanent impacts to 3.7 acres of coastal sage scrub habitat and 0.65 acre of coastal sage scrub/chaparral transition habitat. The remaining portion of the site would be mostly unaffected by the project. While no sensitive species were observed on the site, coastal sage scrub generally provides breeding and foraging habitat for the federally-threatened California gnatcatcher and other sensitive wildlife and plant

species.

Mitigation to reduce impacts to coastal sage scrub and sensitive species which generally breed and forage in coastal sage scrub will be in accordance with SDG&E's approved Section 10(a) permit and NCCP and USFWS and CDFG requirements. In addition to complying with the requirements of SDG&E's NCCP, measures are included to mitigate potential impacts to the federally endangered quino checkerspot butterfly as well as further reduce potential impacts to the California gnatcatcher. Implementation of these measures will reduce impacts to biological resources to less than significant (see *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project,* as well as *Section 5.4, Biological Resources,* for further discussion).

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

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. As revealed by the previous discussions for each environmental category, impacts from the proposed project are considered to be less than significant or no impact after the incorporation of mitigation measures. Measures are incorporated into the project which reduce impacts associated with geological resources, hydrology and water quality, air quality, traffic, biological resources, hazards, paleontological resources, noise, public utilities, and visual resource impacts to less than significant (see *Section 2.6, Mitigation Measures Included Into the Project*). No long-term significant impacts are associated with the project. In the absence of significant impacts, incremental accumulation of effects would not occur. Therefore, the proposed project does not incrementally contribute to cumulative impacts.

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

Less than Significant Impact. Based on the analysis of all the above questions, it has been determined that there would be no significant direct or indirect effect on human beings.

SECTION 6.0
ELECTRIC MAGNETIC FIELDS (EMF)

During the last several years, representatives of the public have expressed concern about the potential health risk associated with power frequency electric and magnetic fields (EMF). Numerous internationally recognized scientific organizations and independent regulatory advisory groups have conducted scientific reviews of the EMF research literature. The results of this research are inconclusive and public concern and scientific uncertainty remain regarding the potential health effects of EMF exposure.

In January 1991, the CPUC issued an Order Instituting Investigation to develop policies and procedures for addressing potential health effects of magnetic fields from utility facilities. The CPUC formed the California Consensus Group (CCG), a committee of 17 stakeholds representing diverse interests and perspectives, to provide guidance on interim EMF measures the CPUC might have adopted while waiting for resolution of scientific uncertainties. In March 1992, the CCG issued its report. In part, the report recommended that the CPUC authorize utilities to implement magnetic field reduction techniques if those techniques could be implemented at little or no cost. In November 1993, the CPUC issued Decision 93-11-013 adopting interim policy regarding EMF. California's electric utilities were authorized to implement no- and low-cost (low cost is defined as 4% of total project cost) field management techniques to reduce EMF levels from new and upgraded electrical facilities if a noticeable reduction could be achieved.

The proposed project incorporates measures to reduce EMF exposure in compliance with CPUC Decision 93-11-013. SDG&E's EMF Design Guidelines for Transmission, Distribution and Substation Facilities (SDG&E EMF Design Guidelines, May 1994) describe engineering techniques for reducing exposure to magnetic fields created by its electric facilities in compliance with CPUC Decision 93-11-013. Field management technique/guidelines for the Valley Center Substation project include:

1) Locate substation equipment as close to the center of the substation as possible.
2) Use metal clad switchgear for 12 kV bus work which reduces phase spacing and produces lower magnetic fields.
3) Locate substation as close to the existing transmission right-of-way as possible.
4) Construct an underground 69 kV transmission loop-in from the existing TL 681B to the new Valley Center substation (approximate length 1,000 feet).
5) Increase underground right-of-way to 48 feet.

SECTION 7.0
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SECTION 8.0
REFERENCES

8.1 Literature Cited

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8.2 Persons Consulted

! Larry Glavinic, Chairman, Valley Center Community Planning Group

APPENDIX A

Public Distribution

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APPENDIX B

Site Selection

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APPENDIX B
SITE SELECTION

1998 SDG&E Site Selection Study

San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) began a site selection study in October 1998 that consisted of fifteen potential sites for a proposed electric substation in the community of Valley Center. These fifteen candidate sites were selected from site visits, review of the Community Plan, existing land use, zoning, and hydrological research. A number of field visits by SDG&E's project team of engineers, planners, and designers were conducted, as well as a comprehensive decision analysis to determine feasible sites. Five-of the fifteen sites were determined to be not feasible for substation construction due to lack of access, floodplains, acreage constraints, and land use incompatibilities.

In November 1998, SDG&E representatives presented a progress report of the site selection study to the Valley Center Community Planning Group. SDG&E requested a subcommittee of the planning Board be appointed to assist in the site selection study. The Chair of the Board nominated four people, two Planning Board members, and two Valley Center president as the subcommittee members, which were unanimously approved.

A decision analysis, using a Kepner Trego (K.T.) formula, was performed on the ten remaining sites (see *Figure B-1*), which resulted in a ranking of those sites. Kepner Trego is a formula used to rank sites using factors applicable to the project. The process begins by identifying what the site 'must' have to be a feasible site. Secondly, the project team identifies the factors they 'want' the site to have. Thirdly, the 'musts' and 'wants' are ranked in order of importance. Lastly, the numbers are totaled and ranked using the highest total for the most favorable site. For the subject project, six 'musts' and eleven 'wants' were identified. They included:

Musts

- One-Mile Radius From Load Center
- Not Subject to Flooding
- Safe Vehicular Access
- Minimum Size of 1.65 - 2 acres
- Geotechnically Suitable
- Transmission and Distribution Access

Wants

- Fairly Level
- Land Use Compatibility (current & future)

Appendix B Site Selection

Figure B-1

- Distribution Access
- Proximity to Transmission Line (current & future)
- Vehicular Access
- Land Costs (site and right-of-way)
- Community Approval
- Project Costs
- Environmental Mitigation Costs
- Drainage
- Future Load Center

In December 1998, the subcommittee met to hear the results of SDG&E's analysis and ranking of the remaining ten candidate sites. The subcommittee was asked to vote on five sites in two categories: land use compatibility and community approval. In December 1998, SDG&E ten presented the results of the site selection study to the Valley Center Community Planning Board. The top five SDG&E sites and the top five subcommittee sites were presented to the Board. The Board approved SDG&E's proposed site with a majority vote, which was the Board's first choice as well.

The following nine sites are ranked from 2 - 10 to reflect the order of the site selection analysis. The
site ranked number 1 is the identified project site. A brief biological discussion is included for sites which were part of the biological survey for the proposed project.

Alternative Site 2

The 3.96-acre parcel has an *Industrial* land use designation in the Community Plan. The site is currently an open field consisting of non-native grasses with two individual coast live oak trees and three patches of flat-topped buckwheat-dominated Diegan coastal sage scrub in the southern half of the site. Eucalyptus trees occur along the eastern border and a patch also occurs in the northern half and the Community Planning Group and sub-committee favored the proposed project site more than this alternative site. This site is located in an industrial zoned area, however, the sub-committee ranked this site as 3rd and Community Planning Group ranked it last of the five sites they voted on. Both groups explained they would rather keep the available industrial land for other uses that would benefit the community with property taxes and local employment.

Alternative Site 4

The 8.47-acre triangular shaped parcel has an *Estate* land use designation in the Community Plan. Alternative site 4 consists of three Engelmann oak trees in the center portion of the site, disturbed coastal sage scrub in the northern half, and disturbed chamise chaparral in the southern half with a patch of flat-topped buckwheat-dominated Diegan coastal sage scrub in the southeastern comer. Along the eastern edge that borders Valley Center Road is a strip of exotic trees interspersed with coast live oak trees. Incense-cedar trees and eucalyptus are planted along the western border. The site has an existing 69 kV overhead transmission line with a 12 kV distribution underbuild along the
property line. An office building is currently operating and leasing a portion of the property that has frontage to Valley Center Road. The proposed substation would be located along the southern property boundary. The site abuts Valley Center Road along the eastern boundary and existing residences on the western and southern boundary.

All of the potential environmental effects of developing this site for the proposed substation would be similar to those identified for the proposed project. This site was ranked number one by the sub- committee and number 2 by the Community Planning Group out of the five sites they voted on. However, the SDG&E Kepner Trego (K.T.) formula, discussed above, indicated the following reasons for rejecting the site: it lacks vehicular access to a future substation, the existing 24-foot easement would need to be widened to a 64-foot-wide easement for initial and ultimate construction, it is further from the load center than the proposed site and the other two sites discussed above and it lacks flexibility for substation footprint design options. It is important to note that the Community Planning Group favored the proposed project site more than this alternative site.

Alternative Site 5

The 8.05-acre parcel has a *Service Commercial* land use designation in the Community Plan. The proposed substation would need to be located along the frontage of Valley Center Road because most of it is in the 100-year floodplain. This site was not included in the biological survey for the proposed project.

The environmental effects of developing this site for the proposed substation would be less than those identified for the proposed project. The SDG&E Kepner Trego (K.T.) formula, discussed above, indicated the following reasons for rejecting the site: it lacks flexibility for substation footprint design options due to a majority of the site being located in the floodplain and the site's location along Valley Center Road near the intersection of Cole Grade Road, which is considered the "Future Town Center" for Valley Center. The sub-committee did not favor this site due to its close proximity to the future Town Center. The Community Planning Group did not vote on

this site because it was not within SDG&E's top five sites.

Alternative Site 6

The 15.53 -acre site is located near the comer of Valley Center Road and Cole Grade Road. The site has frontage on the north side of Vesper Road, the Water District to the east, and a County road materials yard to the south and east. The location of the proposed substation would be limited to the frontage of Vesper Road due to other existing uses on the site. This site was not included in the biological survey for the proposed project.

This site is disturbed and currently being utilized as dirt/rock storage for a municipal agency, thus there would be no environmental effects of developing this site. The SDG&E Kepner Trego (K.T.) formula, discussed above, indicated the following reasons for rejecting the site: its close proximity across the street from the elementary school, its distance from the transmission line, and new easements would be required for the extended transmission line. The sub-committee did not favor this site due to its proximity to the school and future Town Center. The Community Planning Group did not vote on this site because it was not within SDG&E's top five sites.

Alternative Site 7

The 6.77-acre square shaped parcel has an *Estate* land use designation in the Community Plan. The site was bought in 1974 by SDG&E in anticipation of building a substation to serve the projected electric load growth at that time. However, due to growth forecasts, the substation was not built. The site has frontage on Valley Center Road, with access from Valley Center Road. This site was chosen by SDG&E due to the existing overhead 12 kV and 69 kV distribution and transmission lines across the street along Valley Center Road. The getaways would be installed underground into the substation.

The environmental effects of developing this site would be similar to those identified for the proposed substation site. This site is characterized by a swale through the center. The riparian habitats of coast live oak riparian forest, coast live oak woodland, arroyo willow riparian forest, and mulefat scrub occur along this swale. Upland communities such as coastal sage scrub and non-native grasslands occur on either side of the riparian communities. In addition, there are scattered individuals of coast live oak and Engelmann oak throughout the site. Lastly, an unvegetated channel
which would qualify as "waters of the U.S." occurs along the northeastern comer of the site.

The potential biological impacts could be mitigated by SDG&E.'s NCCP, as well as obtaining a California Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Agreement and a 404 Army Corps of Engineers permit. The site abuts existing residences on the eastern and northern boundary, and vacant parcels on the southern and western boundary.

The site was rejected from further consideration due to neighborhood opposition of the location and the Community Planning Group's action of recommending SDG&E to abandon the site and look at alternative sites.

Alternative Site 8

This square shaped parcel has an *Estate* land use designation in the Community Plan. The site is currently vacant and has frontage along Valley Center Road. It abuts existing residential on the northern boundary and vacant parcels on the western and eastern boundaries. There are existing 12 kV and 69 kV overhead distribution and transmission lines along Valley Center Road. This site was not included in the biological survey for the proposed project.

The environmental effects of developing this site are not similar to the proposed project site. The majority of the site is predominantly non-native grasses and located in the floodplain. Although these effects are not considered significant, the SDG&E Kepner Trego (K.T.) formula, discussed above, indicated the following reasons for rejecting the site: it is the furthest from the load center in comparison to all the other alternative sites, there are existing adjacent residences, there is less opportunity for a landscape buffer due to the flat topography, and the floodplain boundary results in a lack of substation design options. The sub-committee did not favor this site due to potential drainage issues and proximity to adjacent residences. The Community Planning Group did not vote on this site because it was not within SDG&E's top five sites.

Alternative Site 9

The 7.86-acre rectangular shaped parcel has a *Service Commercial* land use designation in the Community Plan. The site is currently vacant and has frontage along Valley Center Road. It is adjacent to a commercial center and post office on its eastern boundary, and vacant parcels on the northern and western boundaries. The site has existing 12 kV overhead distribution lines along Valley Center Road.

This site consists of predominantly non-native grasses and the environmental effects of developing this site for the proposed substation would be less than those identified for the proposed project. Although the environmental effects are less, the SDG&E Kepner Trego (K.T.) formula, discussed above, indicated the following reasons for rejecting the site: it is designated as the "Future Town Center" for Valley Center, the 69 kV overhead transmission line would require a new 64-foot-wide easement along private property and across Valley Center Road to the proposed substation, and drainage improvements would be required. The sub-committee did not favor this site due to its designation as Valley Center's future Town Center. The Community Planning Group did not vote

on this site because it was not within SDG&E's top five sites.

Alternative Site 10

The 29.67-acre irregular shaped parcel has a *Service Commercial* land use designation in the Community Plan. The site is currently vacant and has frontage along Cole Grade Road. It abuts the same commercial center and post office as Alternative site 6, in the southeast comer. There are vacant parcels on the northern, western, southern, and eastern boundaries. There are existing 12 kV overhead distribution lines on Cole Grade and Valley Center Roads that would need to cross other properties to reach the proposed substation.

This site was not included in the biological survey for the proposed project, but a preliminary survey of the site identified predominately non-native grasses. The potential environmental effects of developing this site for the proposed substation would be less than those identified for the proposed project. Although these effects are not considered significant, the SDG&E Kepner Trego (K.T.) formula, discussed above, indicated the following reasons for rejecting the site: it is designated as the"Future Town Center" for Valley Center and the 69 kV overhead transmission line would require a new 64-foot-wide easement along private property and across Valley Center Road to extend to the proposed site. The sub-committee did not favor this site due to its designation as being within Valley Center's future Town Center. The Community Planning Group did not vote on this site because it was not within SDG&E's top five sites.

APPENDIX C

Aesthetics

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APPENDIX C
AESTHETICS

The *Valley Center Design Guidelines* (County of San Diego 1990) list several site design and aesthetic considerations for new projects. Guidelines that pertain to the proposed substation include:

- Design of the road edge for Valley Center Road
- Visual linkages between planting, buildings, and open space
- Planting design and plant lists and site lighting

Substation and landscape design took into account these considerations and was unanimously supported by the Valley Center Design Review Board. The substation pad is setback approximately 100 feet from the centerline of Valley Center Road and about 200 feet from the centerline of Vesper Road. Landscaping and the perimeter wall screen views of the proposed substation from along Valley Center Road and Vesper Road. Landscape plants were chosen to blend with the surrounding native and non-native species in the project vicinity. The lighting has been designed to minimize the emission of light rays into both the night sky and neighboring properties, and the lighting is limited to the minimum necessary for security and safety.

In order to assess the visual effect of the finished substation, photographs were taken of the existing site from several locations. *Figure C-1* depicts four photograph locations that best show the proposed substation. Photograph 1 (*Figure C-2*) shows existing views, initial views after construction and installation of landscaping and ultimate views with fully mature landscaping of the project site from Vesper Road near its intersection with Valley Center Road. As can be seen in the simulation, views to the substation would be screened by the perimeter wall and landscaping and therefore considered to be less than significant.

Photograph 2 (*Figure C-3*) is taken further east on Vesper Road near the proposed entrance driveway. The view is toward the southeast and shows the existing view, initial view after construction and installation of landscaping, and ultimate view with mature landscaping surrounding the site. The view is representative of eastbound traveling motorists or pedestrians on Vesper Road near the proposed substation entrance. As shown in the simulation, landscaping and the perimeter wall will screen a majority of the substation equipment, with only a small portion of the substation visible above the wall. This view is considered to be less than significant.

Figure C-1 Photograph Location Map

Figure C-2 Existing, Initial and Ultimate Views from Photograph Location 1

Figure C-3 Existing, Initial and Ultimate Views from Photograph Location 2

Except for being more distant, views of the site from neighboring residences and businesses would be similar in nature to those depicted in *Figures C-2* and *C-3.* It should be noted that there are also distant views to the site from approximately 3/4 of a mile to the southwest on Chaparral Terrace and Calle de Vista (*Figure C-4*), which are at a higher elevation than the proposed project site. Nearby and distant views to the site would be screened by the perimeter wall and landscaping, and in some instances by existing vegetation and topography. The visual impact of the proposed project to neighboring residences, neighboring businesses, and distant residences is considered to be less than significant.

Views of the site for motorists on Valley Center Road would be most prominent from vehicles approaching the site from the west, and prior to Valley Center Road's intersection with Vesper Road. While traveling eastbound on Valley Center Road between Cole Grade Road and Vesper Road, and assuming a travel speed of approximately 45 miles per hour over this 500-foot distance, a motorist would have a converging view of the site directly in front of them for about 16 seconds. Views for motorists while approaching on this segment of Valley Center Road, albeit further away, would be similar to that depicted in *Figure C-3.* Their view would then be oriented to the southeast as Valley Center Road turns around the proposed project site. This portion of Valley Center Road on the southwest side of the project site is surrounded by a cut slope on either side of the road. These views would not be significantly altered. Views from westbound Valley Center Road are not directed as prominently toward the project site and are more intermittent due to vegetation and topography. Views from Valley Center Road on the southwest side of the site while traveling westbound are also obscured by the adjacent cut slope in the southern portion of the property. Views of the site on westbound Valley Center Road near the northern portion of the site are more open, and depicted in *Figure C-5.*

Figure C-4 Existing and Proposed Views from Photograph Location 3

Figure C-5 Existing and Proposed Views from Photograph Location 4

APPENDIX D

Biological Resources

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APPENDIX E

Cultural Resources

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