

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE

SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298

**To: Interested Parties****From:** Billie Blanchard, CPUC, Environmental Project Manager**Subject: Notice of Availability of a Final Environmental Impact Report for San Diego Gas & Electric's Sycamore—Peñasquitos 230-Kilovolt Transmission Line Project (A-14-04-011)****Date:** March 4, 2016

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) has prepared a Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for consideration of the San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) application to build and operate the Sycamore—Peñasquitos 230-Kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line Project (Proposed Project).

A Draft EIR was published September 17, 2015 by the CPUC; the public comment period ended on November 2, 2015. Comments that were submitted on the Draft EIR are presented in Volume I of this Final EIR, along with responses to all comments. Changes made to the Final EIR as a result of comments on the Draft EIR are shown using ~~strikeout~~ and underlined text.

**Availability of the Final EIR**

The Final EIR is being released on March 7, 2016. It is available for review at numerous area libraries (see list in Table 1 at end of this Notice) and for review and download on the project website:

[http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/Environment/info/panoramaenv/Sycamore\\_Penasquitos/index.html](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/Environment/info/panoramaenv/Sycamore_Penasquitos/index.html)

Printed copies of the Executive Summary of the Final EIR with a DVD of the complete document may be requested by email at [sycamorepenasquitos@panoramaenv.com](mailto:sycamorepenasquitos@panoramaenv.com) or by phone (650-373-1200) or fax (650-373-1211). A limited number of additional copies of the complete multi-volume Final EIR document or a stand-alone executive summary with a CD of the entire document are available upon request at the above email address or phone number.

**Description of the Proposed Project**

The Proposed Project would construct a transmission line and modify several substations. The majority of the proposed transmission line would be located in the City of San Diego with small portions in the City of Poway and the Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar east of Interstate 15 (I-15) (refer to Figure 1 at the end of this notice for the Proposed Project alignment). Ancillary proposed activities would occur within the Cities of Carlsbad and Oceanside at existing facilities. The Sycamore—Peñasquitos transmission corridor traverses numerous land uses including residential, open space, military (MCAS Miramar), vacant land, urban, commercial/shopping, industrial/energy facility, park, transportation, and light industrial/business park uses.

The Proposed Project includes the following major components:

- Construction of three overhead segments (Segments A, C, and D) and one underground segment (Segment B) of 230-kV transmission line between Sycamore Canyon Substation and Peñasquitos Canyon Substation
- Modifications at Sycamore Canyon and Peñasquitos Substations to facilitate the connection of the new 230-kV transmission line

- Minor modifications including adjusting relays and upgrading protection on remaining lines at Chicarita, Mission, and San Luis Rey Substations
- Removal or reconfiguration of existing transmission lines at the Encina Hub to open a position for the new 230-kV line in Segment C
- Reversal of positions of existing 230-kV line phase components between the Mission Substation and the Peñasquitos Junction (intersection of Proposed Project Segments C and D) in order to accommodate the bundling of power lines within Segment C

## **Project Objectives**

The CPUC has defined three Basic Project Objectives for the Proposed Project:

1. To maintain long-term grid reliability in the absence of San Onofre Nuclear Generating System (SONGS) generation
2. To deliver energy more efficiently to the load center in San Diego
3. To support deliverability of renewable resources identified in SDG&E's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) portfolio

These objectives have guided the development of alternatives to the Proposed Project.

## **Contents of the Final EIR**

The Final EIR contains over 4,000 pages in three volumes (see Table 2 at the end of this Notice for a list of the contents of each volume). It includes the analysis of the environmental effects of the Proposed Project and of the five alternatives to all or part of the Proposed Project. The Final EIR identifies the impacts that could be significant, and presents mitigation measures, which, if adopted by the CPUC, could avoid, reduce, or minimize these impacts.

**Impacts of the Proposed Project.** The Proposed Project would have seven significant and unavoidable impacts in one or more segments in the following resource areas: aesthetics, transportation and traffic, noise, and recreation. Eleven resource areas would have significant impacts that can be mitigated to a less than significant level or are less than significant without mitigation. The Proposed Project would not have an impact to land use or population and housing.

**Alternatives to the Proposed Project.** An intensive alternatives screening process culminated in the identification and preliminary screening of 43 potential alternatives, including two variations on Alternative 4 that were requested by the public in comments on the Draft EIR. These alternatives encompass both physical routing and system alternatives. Thirty-eight alternatives were eliminated from analysis after screening, and five alternatives were retained for full EIR analysis (refer to Figure 1 at the end of this notice for the alternative alignments). The five retained alternatives are:

- **Alternative 1: Eastern Cable Pole at Carmel Valley Road.** Alternative 1 is a cable pole relocation alternative along the Proposed Project route that would eliminate the impacts associated with the proposed installation of a tubular steel cable pole north of Carmel Valley Road at the northern end of Black Mountain Ranch Community Park.
- **Alternative 2: Eastern Cable Pole at Pole P40 and Underground Alignment through City Open Space or City Water Utility Service Road.** Alternative 2 is a cable pole relocation alternative along the Proposed Project route that would eliminate the impacts associated with the proposed installation of a tubular steel cable pole north of Carmel Valley Road at the northern end of Black Mountain Ranch Community Park.

- **Alternative 3: Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve-Mercy Road Underground.** Alternative 3 is a routing alternative along the Proposed Project route that would install 5.9 miles of underground transmission line that avoids the northern portion of Segment A and all of Segments B and C. Alternative 3 would start where the existing SDG&E right of way crosses Ivy Hill Road and end approximately 550 feet west of the Peñasquitos Junction (i.e., where Proposed Project Segments C and D meet).
- **Alternative 4: Segment D Partial Underground Alignment.** Alternative 4 is a routing alternative along the Proposed Project route that would eliminate the impacts from new tubular steel pole installation along 2.8 miles of Segment D. This alternative would construct a new double-circuit 69-kV power line underground starting at two new cable poles in Proposed Project Segment D near existing lattice tower E17.
- **Alternative 5: Pomerado Road to Miramar Area North Combination Underground/Overhead.** Alternative 5 is a routing alternative located within an entirely new alignment from the Proposed Project. Alternative 5 would underground the majority of the transmission line along a new route with the exception of the east and west ends where the transmission line would be overhead within existing SDG&E rights of way.

**Evaluation of Additional Alternatives.** In response to public comments received on the Draft EIR, two variations of Alternative 4 were considered in the Final EIR. The first variation considered consisted of the underground routing of the 230-kV transmission line instead of the double-circuit 69-kV power lines, and the second variation considered consisted of the underground routing of both the 230-kV and 69-kV circuits. Both variations were screened and eliminated from detailed analysis after being determined technically infeasible due to existing bridge constraints on Carmel Mountain Road.

**Re-Evaluation of Alternatives Ranking.** In response to public comments on Alternative 3 and following additional input on the No Project Alternative scenario by SDG&E, the ranking of alternatives was re-evaluated in the Final EIR to more precisely reflect the relative severity of the different impacts that would occur for the Proposed Project and each alternative. Alternative 3 is now ranked equivalent to the Proposed Project in the comparison of alternatives due to further consideration for the relative severity of community impacts such as noise, air quality, and traffic. The No Project Alternative is now ranked last among the alternatives due to the relative severity of its impacts.

**Environmentally Superior Alternative.** The CPUC identified Alternative 5: Pomerado Road to Miramar Area North Combination Underground/Overhead, as the Environmentally Superior Alternative, as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2). Alternative 5 would avoid construction within all segments of the Proposed Project as it would follow a different alignment that would minimize significant and unavoidable impacts on aesthetics, noise, recreation, and traffic.

### **CEQA Process and CPUC General Proceeding**

CEQA requires that the CPUC provide written responses to public agency comments at least 10 days prior to certifying the EIR (Public Resource Code 21092.5(a)). This is accomplished by sending the Final EIR to all agencies that commented. The CPUC will determine the adequacy of the Final EIR, and if adequate, will certify the document as compliant with CEQA. The CPUC will issue a decision on the Proposed Project, which will be announced and published concurrent with a scheduled CPUC Meeting. The final decision is expected in late spring or early summer of 2016. Within 30 days after the decision is issued by the CPUC, parties can apply for rehearing. For further information on the CPUC's decision-making process, call the CPUC Public Advisor at (866) 849-8390 or (415) 703-2074 or email [public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov).

March 7, 2016

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For additional information or to read the Final EIR online, please go to the website presented on page 1 of this Notice.

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**Table 1. Project Document Repository Sites**

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Carmel Mountain Ranch Library	12095 World Trade Drive, San Diego, CA 92128
Mira Mesa Library	8405 New Salem St., San Diego, CA 92126
North University Community Branch Library	8820 Judicial Drive, San Diego, CA 92122
Oceanside Public Library	330 N. Coast Highway, Oceanside, CA 92054
Poway Branch, San Diego County Library	13137 Poway Road, Poway, CA 92064
Rancho Peñasquitos Library	13330 Salmon River Road, San Diego, CA 92129
Scripps Miramar Ranch Library	10301 Scripps Lake Drive, San Diego, CA 92131
University Community Library	4155 Governor Drive, San Diego, CA 92122

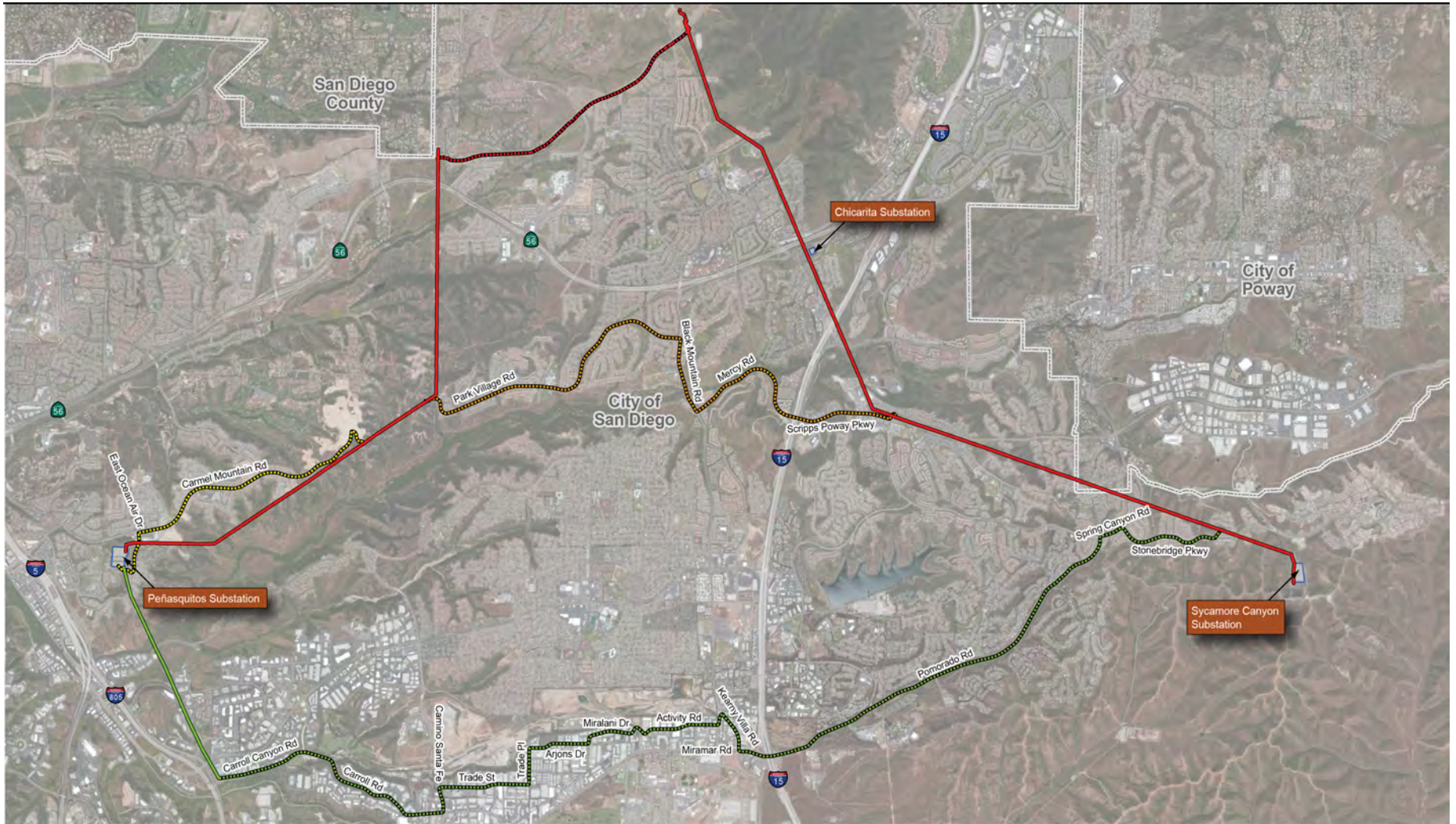
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**Table 2. Contents and Organization of the Final EIR**

<b>Volume 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Final EIR Notice of Availability</li> <li>▪ Preface to Final EIR</li> <li>▪ Section 1: Introduction</li> <li>▪ Section 2: Public Review Process</li> <li>▪ Section 3: Comments and Responses</li> <li>▪ Attachment 1: Draft EIR Public Review Materials</li> <li>▪ Attachment 2: Agency Correspondence</li> <li>▪ Attachment 3: EMF Data for Project Alternatives</li> <li>▪ Attachment 4: Park Village Road Measurements</li> <li>▪ Attachment 5: Summary and Detailed Tables of Vegetation Community Impacts</li> </ul>	
<b>Volume 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Acronyms and Abbreviations</li> <li>▪ Glossary</li> <li>▪ Executive Summary                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Impact Summary Tables</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Chapter 1: Introduction</li> <li>▪ Chapter 2: Project Description</li> <li>▪ Chapter 3: Alternatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Chapter 4: Environmental Analysis                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Section 4.1: Biological Resources</li> <li>- Section 4.2: Aesthetics</li> <li>- Section 4.3: Cultural Resources</li> <li>- Section 4.4: Paleontological Resources</li> <li>- Section 4.5: Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources</li> <li>- Section 4.6: Hydrology and Water Resources</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Volume 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Chapter 4 (continued)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Section 4.7: Transportation and Traffic</li> <li>- Section 4.8: Noise</li> <li>- Section 4.9: Land Use and Planning</li> <li>- Section 4.10: Recreation</li> <li>- Section 4.11: Hazards and Hazardous Materials</li> <li>- Section 4.12: Fire and Fuels Management</li> <li>- Section 4.13: Air Quality</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Section 4.14: Greenhouse Gas Emissions</li> <li>- Section 4.15: Agriculture and Forestry</li> <li>- Section 4.16: Population and Housing</li> <li>- Section 4.17: Utilities and Public Service Systems</li> <li>▪ Chapter 5: Cumulative Impacts</li> <li>▪ Chapter 6: Comparison of Alternatives</li> <li>▪ Chapter 7: Other CEQA Considerations</li> <li>▪ Chapter 8: Report Preparation</li> <li>▪ Chapter 9: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan</li> </ul>
<b>On CD Only</b>	<p><b><u>Appendices</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ App A. Detailed Project Route Maps</li> <li>▪ App B. Proposed Project Pole Details</li> <li>▪ App C. Magnetic Field Management Plan</li> <li>▪ App D. Alternatives Screening Report</li> <li>▪ App E. Detailed Alternative Route Maps</li> <li>▪ App F. Aesthetic Resources Supporting Information</li> <li>▪ App G. Biological Resources Supporting Information</li> <li>▪ App H. Cultural Resources Supporting Information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ App I. Draft Fire Prevention Plan</li> <li>▪ App J. Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Supporting Information</li> <li>▪ App K. City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan Consistency Analysis</li> <li>▪ App L. SDG&amp;E Best Management Practices Manual</li> <li>▪ App M. Transportation and Traffic Supporting Information</li> <li>▪ App N. Hazards and Hazardous Materials Supporting Information</li> <li>▪ App O. Geotechnical Study for the Proposed Project</li> </ul>



**Figure 1. Proposed Project and Alternative Alignments**



SOURCES: Esri 2015, SDG&E 2015, and Panorama Environmental, Inc. 2015

Scale: 1:50,000

**LEGEND**

- Proposed Alignment (overhead)
- - - Proposed Alignment (underground)
- - - Alternative 3: Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve - Mercy Road Underground Alternative
- - - Alternative 4: Segment D 69kV Partial Underground Alignment
- - - Alternative 5: Pomarado Road to Miramar Area North Combination Underground/Overhead Alternative (overhead)
- - - Alternative 5: Pomarado Road to Miramar Area North Combination Underground/Overhead Alternative (underground)
- City Boundary



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