
***Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration
For:***

COOK STREET SUBSTATION PROJECT

**Prepared By:
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Prepared For:



**333 Barioni Boulevard
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February 24, 2026

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APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Biological Resource Assessment for the Imperial Irrigation District Cook Substation Project
Thousand Palms, California.
- Appendix B: Cultural Resource Assessment for the Proposed Cook Substation, Imperial Irrigation District
Project.
- Appendix C: Tribal Consultation Letters.

SECTION 1

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

This document is a policy-level, project level Initial Study for evaluation of potential environmental impacts resulting from construction of the proposed Cook Street Substation Project.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) REQUIREMENTS

As defined by Section 15063 of the State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, an Initial Study is prepared primarily to provide the Lead Agency with information to use as the basis for determining whether an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), Negative Declaration, or Mitigated Negative Declaration would be appropriate for providing the necessary environmental documentation and clearance for any proposed project.

According to Section 15065, an EIR is deemed appropriate for a particular proposal if the following conditions occur:

- The proposal has the potential to degrade the quality of the environment.
- The proposal has the potential to achieve short-term environmental goals to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals.
- The proposal has possible environmental effects that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable.
- The proposal could cause direct or indirect adverse effects on human beings.

According to Section 15070(a), a Negative Declaration is deemed appropriate if the proposal would not result in any significant effect on the environment.

According to Section 15070(b), a Mitigated Negative Declaration is deemed appropriate if it is determined that though a proposal could result in a significant effect, mitigation measures are available to reduce these significant effects to insignificant levels.

This Initial Study is prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended (Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et. seq.); Section 15070 of the State Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000, et. seq.); applicable requirements of the Imperial Irrigation District (IID); and the regulations, requirements, and procedures of any other responsible public agency or an agency with jurisdiction by law.

The IID is designated Lead Agency, in accordance with Section 15050 of the CEQA Guidelines. The Lead Agency is the public agency which has the principal responsibility for approving the necessary environmental clearances and analyses for the project.

B. INTENDED USES OF INITIAL STUDY

This Initial Study is an informational document which is intended to inform the IID decision makers, other responsible or interested agencies, and the general public of potential environmental effects of the proposed applications. The environmental review process has been established to enable public agencies to evaluate environmental consequences and to examine and implement methods of eliminating or reducing any potentially

adverse impacts. While CEQA requires that consideration be given to avoiding environmental damage, the Lead Agency and other responsible public agencies must balance adverse environmental effects against other public objectives, including economic and social goals.

The Initial Study prepared for the project will be circulated for a period of 35 days for public and agency review and comments. At the conclusion, if comments are received, the IID will prepare a document entitled "Responses to Comments" which will be forwarded to any commenting entity and be made part of the record within 10-days of any project consideration.

C. CONTENTS OF INITIAL STUDY

This Initial Study is organized to facilitate a basic understanding of the existing setting and environmental implications of the proposed application.

SECTION 1

I. INTRODUCTION presents an introduction to the entire report. This section discusses the environmental process, scope of environmental review, and incorporation by reference documents.

SECTION 2

II. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM contains the Environmental Checklist Form. The checklist form presents results of the environmental evaluation for the proposed applications and those issue areas that would have either a significant impact, potentially significant impact, or no impact.

PROJECT SUMMARY, LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTINGS describes the proposed project entitlements and required applications. A description of discretionary approvals and permits required for project implementation is also included. It also identifies the location of the project and a general description of the surrounding environmental settings.

ANALYSIS evaluates each response provided in the environmental checklist form. Each response checked in the checklist form is discussed and supported with sufficient data and analysis, as necessary. As appropriate, each response discussion describes and identifies specific impacts anticipated with project implementation.

SECTION 3

III. MANDATORY FINDINGS presents Mandatory Findings of Significance in accordance with Section 15065 of the CEQA Guidelines.

IV. PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS CONSULTED identifies those persons consulted and involved in preparation of this Initial Study and Negative Declaration.

V. REFERENCES lists bibliographical materials used in the preparation of this document.

VI. FINDINGS

SECTION 4

VIII. RESPONSE TO COMMENTS (IF ANY)

IX. MITIGATION MONITORING & REPORTING PROGRAM (MMRP) (IF ANY)

D. SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

For evaluation of environmental impacts, each question from the Environmental Checklist Form is summarized and responses are provided according to the analysis undertaken as part of the Initial Study. Impacts and effects will be evaluated and quantified, when appropriate. To each question, there are four responses, including:

1. No Impact: A “No Impact” response is adequately supported if the impact simply does not apply to the proposed applications.
2. Less Than Significant Impact: The proposed applications will have the potential to impact the environment. These impacts, however, will be less than significant; no additional analysis is required.
3. Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated: This applies where incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact.”
4. Potentially Significant Impact: The proposed applications could have impacts that are considered significant. Additional analyses and an EIR could be required to identify mitigation measures that could reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

E. POLICY-LEVEL or PROJECT LEVEL ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This Initial Study will be conducted under a policy-level, project level analysis. Regarding mitigation measures, it is not the intent of this document to “overlap” or restate conditions of approval that are commonly established for future known projects or the proposed applications. Additionally, those other standard requirements and regulations that any development must comply with, that are outside the IID’s jurisdiction, are also not considered mitigation measures and therefore, will not be identified in this document.

F. TIERED DOCUMENTS AND INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

Information, findings, and conclusions contained in this document are based on incorporation by reference of tiered documentation, which are discussed in the following section.

1. Tiered Documents

As permitted in Section 15152(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, information and discussions from other documents can be included in this document. Tiering is defined as follows:

“Tiering refers to using the analysis of general matters contained in a broader EIR (such as the one prepared for a general plan or policy statement) with later EIRs and negative declarations on narrower projects; incorporating by reference the general discussions from the broader EIR; and concentrating the later EIR or negative declaration solely on the issues specific to the later project.”

Tiering also allows this document to comply with Section 15152(b) of the CEQA Guidelines, which discourages redundant analyses, as follows:

“Agencies are encouraged to tier the environmental analyses which they prepare for separate but related projects including the general plans, zoning changes, and development projects. This approach can eliminate repetitive discussion of the same issues and focus the later EIR or negative declaration on the actual issues ripe for decision at each level of environmental review. Tiering is appropriate when the sequence of analysis is from an EIR prepared for a general plan, policy, or program to an EIR or negative declaration for another plan, policy, or program of lesser scope, or to a site-specific EIR or negative declaration.”

Further, Section 15152(d) of the CEQA Guidelines states:

“Where an EIR has been prepared and certified for a program, plan, policy, or ordinance consistent with the requirements of this section, any lead agency for a later project pursuant to or consistent with the program, plan, policy, or ordinance should limit the EIR or negative declaration on the later project to effects which:

- (1) Were not examined as significant effects on the environment in the prior EIR; or
- (2) Are susceptible to substantial reduction or avoidance by the choice of specific revisions in the project, by the imposition of conditions, or other means.”

2. Incorporation by Reference

Incorporation by reference is a procedure for reducing the size of EIRs/MND and is most appropriate for including long, descriptive, or technical materials that provide general background information, but do not contribute directly to the specific analysis of the project itself. This procedure is particularly useful when an EIR or Negative Declaration relies on a broadly drafted EIR for its evaluation of cumulative impacts of related projects (*Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation v. County of Los Angeles* [1986, 177 Ca.3d 300]). If an EIR or Negative Declaration relies on information from a supporting study that is available to the public, the EIR or Negative Declaration cannot be deemed unsupported by evidence or analysis (*San Francisco Ecology Center v. City and County of San Francisco* [1975, 48 Ca.3d 584, 595]).

When an EIR or Negative Declaration incorporates a document by reference, the incorporation must comply with Section 15150 of the CEQA Guidelines as follows:

- The incorporated document must be available to the public or be a matter of public record (CEQA Guidelines Section 15150[a]). This document must be available for inspection by the public at an office of the lead agency (CEQA Guidelines Section 15150[b]).
- These documents must summarize the portion of the document being incorporated by reference or briefly describe information that cannot be summarized. Furthermore, these documents must describe the relationship between the incorporated information and the analysis in the tiered documents (CEQA Guidelines Section 15150[c]). As discussed above, the tiered EIRs address the entire project site, provide background, and inventory information and data which apply to the project site. Incorporated information and/or data will be cited in the appropriate sections.
- These documents must include the State identification number of the incorporated documents (CEQA Guidelines Section 15150[d]).

The material to be incorporated in this document will include general background information (CEQA Guidelines Section 15150[f]). This has been previously discussed in this document.

SECTION 2

II. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

- 1. Project Title:** Cook Street Substation
- 2. Lead Agency:** Imperial Irrigation District
- 3. Contact person and phone number:** Jeremy J Brooks, Environmental Compliance & Real Estate; (760) 339-9632
- 4. Address:** 333 E. Barioni Blvd., Imperial, CA
- 5. E-mail:** iidenvironmental@iid.com
- 6. Project location:** The proposed project Cook Street Substation Project (project) is located on Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 694-050-019, which is an approximately 22.36-acre parcel on the west side of an unpaved portion of Cook Street, approximately 1.1 miles north of Interstate I-10 Freeway in Thousand Palms, California (Figure 1). Thousand Palms is a census-designated place in the Coachella Valley of Riverside County. The project site is within the Western Coachella Valley Area Plan and the Cathedral City Sphere of Influence (SOI).

The proposed substation will be built on approximately 5.75 acres of the parcel (Figure 2) and includes the replacement of two existing power poles located within the right-of-way (ROW) along the northern property boundary line and installation of supporting distribution lines.

- 7. Project sponsor's name and address:** Imperial Irrigation District
- 8. General Plan Designation:** The Riverside County General Plan designates five broad Foundation Component land uses: Agriculture, Rural, Rural Community, Open Space, and Community Development. The proposed Cook Street Substation project is located on land designated as Community Development Foundation. Within this Foundation Component, Riverside County further designates nine separate residential categories of varying densities and uses. The project site is within the Medium High Density Residential (MHDR) designation which is a land use designation that provides for the development of smaller lot, single family residences. Typical allowable uses in this category include detached, small-lot single family homes, patio homes, and townhouses.
- 9. Zoning:** The project site has a zoning designation of Mobilehome Subdivision and Mobilehome Park (R-T).
- 10. Description of Project:** The Cook Street Substation Project (project) is located within the boundaries of Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 694-050-019 property bounded by an unpaved portion of Cook Street on the east, and open space on the north, west and south. The proposed project will occur in the northeastern portion of the property to be located adjacent to existing transmission lines and include approximately 3.85 miles of new distribution lines.

Project Need: This new substation has been identified as a priority to serve the new development's capacity requirements in this area. Riverside County in the community of Thousand Palms, in addition to the Cities of Rancho Mirage and Palm Desert, are experiencing a high demand for new developments, including

affordable housing, with a large amount of loading/capacity requirements. Based on official requests received from Riverside County developments, and the City of Rancho Mirage and Palm Desert capacity requirements amount to at least 78 MVA is needed to serve new developments as hotels, hospitality, hospitals, restaurants, industrial, commercial, and residential subdivisions. This substation has been identified as part of the 10-Year Coachella Valley Transmission/Distribution Expansion Plan, mainly triggered by planned developments in this area.

The project includes the following components which are described in greater detail below:

a) Grading of existing site	j) 1200A Capacity circuit breaker (two)
b) 50 Megavolt-Amperes (MVA) transformers (up to three)	k) 2000A Tie circuit breaker
c) Transmission 92-kilovolt (kV) upgrades/line extensions	l) 3000A Miniature circuit breaker (two)
d) Distribution getaways for 12.47 kV distribution circuits (twenty)	m) 15 kV Capacitor banks (two)
e) Conduit and vault systems for distribution getaways	n) Control building
f) 1200 Ampere (A) 92-kV circuit breakers (four)	o) Substation vaults (four)
g) 92-kV Disconnect switches (six)	p) Underground ducts with 6" conduit systems (four)
h) 92-kV Disconnect switches with ground (two)	q) Concrete foundations
i) Distribution buses with 10-1200A feeder breakers (two)	r) Grounding

The new distribution substation will include up to three 50 Megavolt-Ampere (MVA) transformers and 92-kilovolt (kV) transmission line upgrades/extensions which will follow the existing transmission line route. This new substation will also include the implementation of distribution getaways for up to thirty 12.47 kV distribution circuits with conduit and vault systems to be stubbed out for future connections.

Substation: The installation of the new electrical substation includes three 50 MVA transformers and facilities that will interconnect with the existing 92-kV transmission system. The work associated to this new substation requires the design, procurement, and construction of up to three 50 MVA 92/13.2-kV power transformers with associated equipment and the preparations to accommodate a 92-kV transmission line extension, if required. The associated equipment includes four 1200 ampere (A) 92-kV circuit breakers, a 40-kA circuit breaker, six 92-kV disconnect switches, two 92-kV disconnect switches with ground, two distribution buses with ten 1200A feeder breakers, two 1200A capacity circuit breakers, one 2000 A tie CB, two 3000 A miniature circuit breakers, two 15-kV capacitor banks, one control building with relays duplex panel and battery room, four substation vaults, four underground ducts with 6" conduit systems for the IID distribution feeder's getaways to the interconnection point, and a wall fence as per IID Standards. All new equipment will be bonded to a new grounding grid and conduit and grounding shall be extended as required.

The substation site, including all conduit, grounding, switches, and steel structures will be fenced with a masonry wall. The substation will be built with one control building with underground conduits, copper ground grid, all necessary AC and DC panels, a supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) unit, an appropriate battery room with a lead acid battery bank with a battery monitoring system, and a battery

charger. All switches, insulators, and surge arrestors will be mounted in hot-deep galvanized steel supports.

Distribution: The distribution feeder getaways include getaways necessary to accommodate twenty to thirty new underground 12.47 kV distribution circuits. The underground getaway system will consist of up to four vault systems and up to thirty 6" polyvinyl chloride (PVC) conduits with an average length of approximately 500 feet for each run from the substation. These getaways will later be used to facilitate connections to separate underground conduit and vault system and/or overhead lines that are anticipated to be aligned along existing roadways and/or existing power line corridors as indicated in Figure 3. All duct banks will be installed in a trench from the substation vaults to their proposed locations.

Distribution line installation and upgrades will be necessary to provide service from the proposed substation to existing and future customers of the region. Portions of the area's existing distribution network will need to be upgraded and new power lines will be installed to distribute electricity from the substation. Figures 3a-3b, Existing and Proposed Feeders, depict power distribution lines that will be utilized by the proposed substation. As shown in Figure 3a-3b, there are four segments (Segments A-D) of new distribution lines that are proposed totaling approximately 3.85 miles. The remaining distribution lines shown in Figures 3a-3b are existing but may require the addition of new additional distribution lines.

Underground vaults will be staggered on each route to reduce parkways, easements, and PUEs, including concrete encasement over schedule 40 PVC conduits. The minimum cover for all conduit work will be 48" inches from the top of the conduit to the proposed finished grade. Overhead lines would consist of wood poles approximately 35 to 45 feet tall and overhead conductors spanning approximately two-hundred feet between poles. Installation of new overhead feeder lines on existing poles would not include work that would lead to new impacts and are, therefore, not included in this project description.

Transmission: The transmission line component of the proposed project for the substation would consist of transmission line "in and out" to an existing 92-kV transmission line and V913 distribution circuit under-build to the proposed Cook Street Substation project. The existing overhead power line is located adjacent to the project site, running along the west and north sides of the property. As a part of the proposed Cook Street Substation project, two 75-foot self-supported, dead-end tubular steel poles will be installed to intercept the existing 92-kV transmission line in front of the proposed project site to build the "in and out" interconnection. This proposed substation is planned to be served by the existing 92-kV transmission line that runs in proximity to the substation property line. The 92-kV transmission lines serving this substation will be designed to terminate in two steel "H" frame structures. This would require the removal of two 70-foot, directly buried, tangent wood poles and the installation of two new, approximately 75-foot, dead-end tubular steel poles. A new 92-kV overhead conductor would be used to connect these new poles to the new and proposed substation, creating the loop-in and out connecting to the distribution lines proposed to be aligned along existing roadways and/or existing power line corridors.

11. Surrounding land uses and setting: The project site will be located on a 5.75-acre portion of a 22.36-acre parcel of undeveloped desert land that is surrounding on the west, north and east sides by currently undeveloped desert land. To the south of the project site is the Ivey Ranch Country Club residential community and golf course. To the southeast lies a community center dedicated for people playing the card game Bridge (Duncan Bridge Center) as well as the Xavier College Preparatory High School.

12. Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.): Imperial Irrigation District (IID), encroachment permits County of Riverside



Figure 1
Regional Location Map

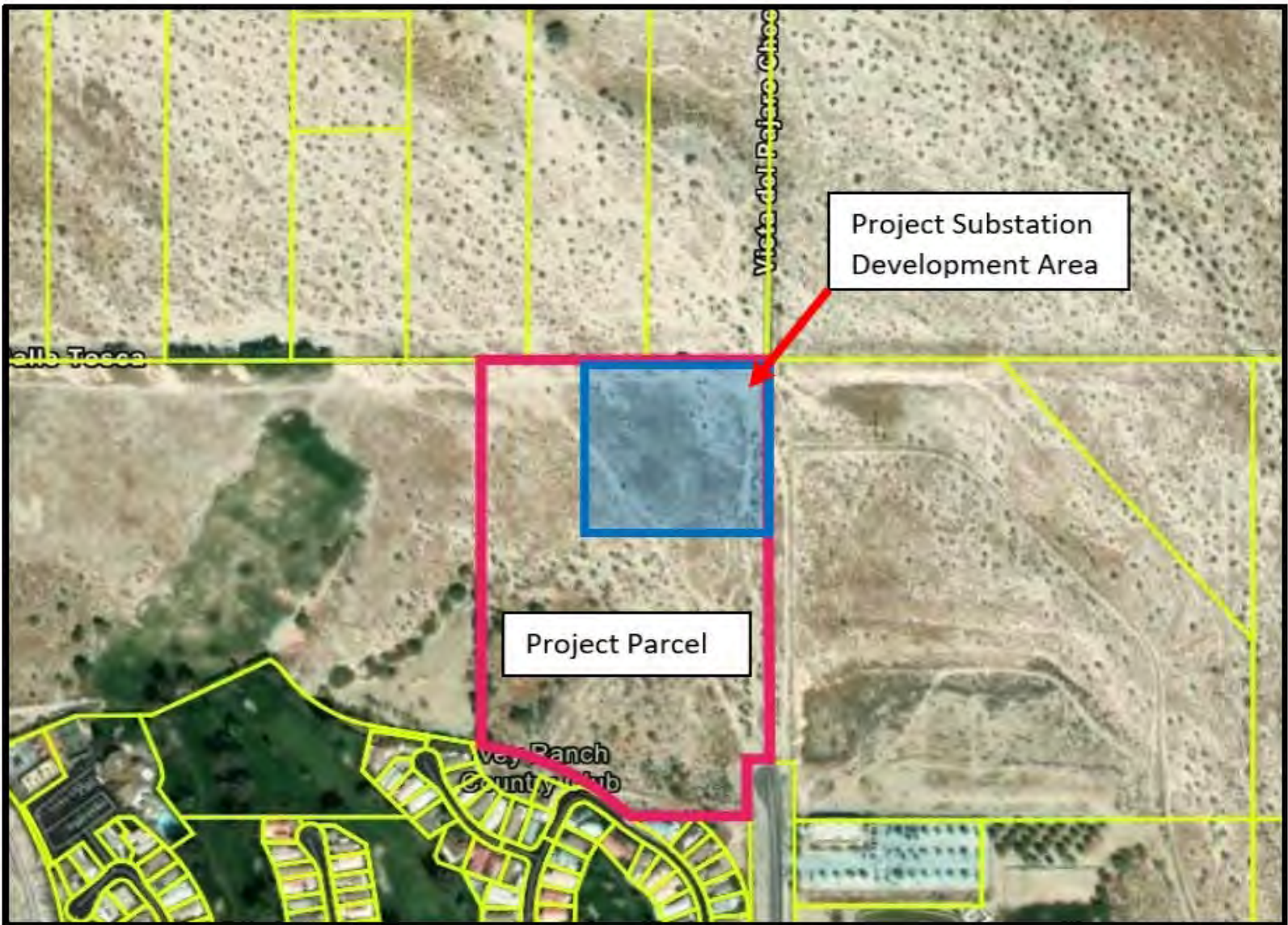
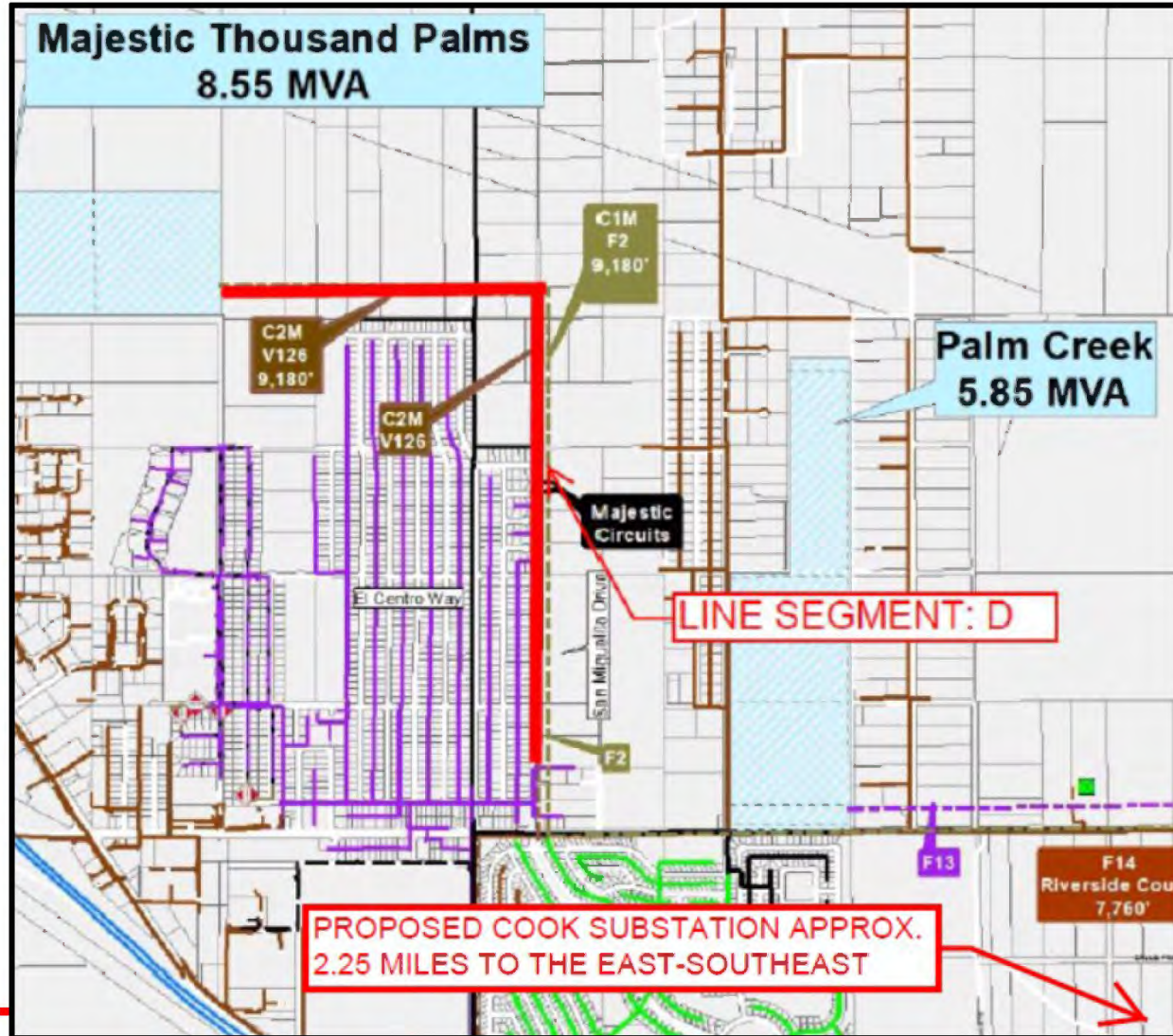


Figure 2
Project Development Area

Figure 3a
Existing and Proposed Distribution Lines

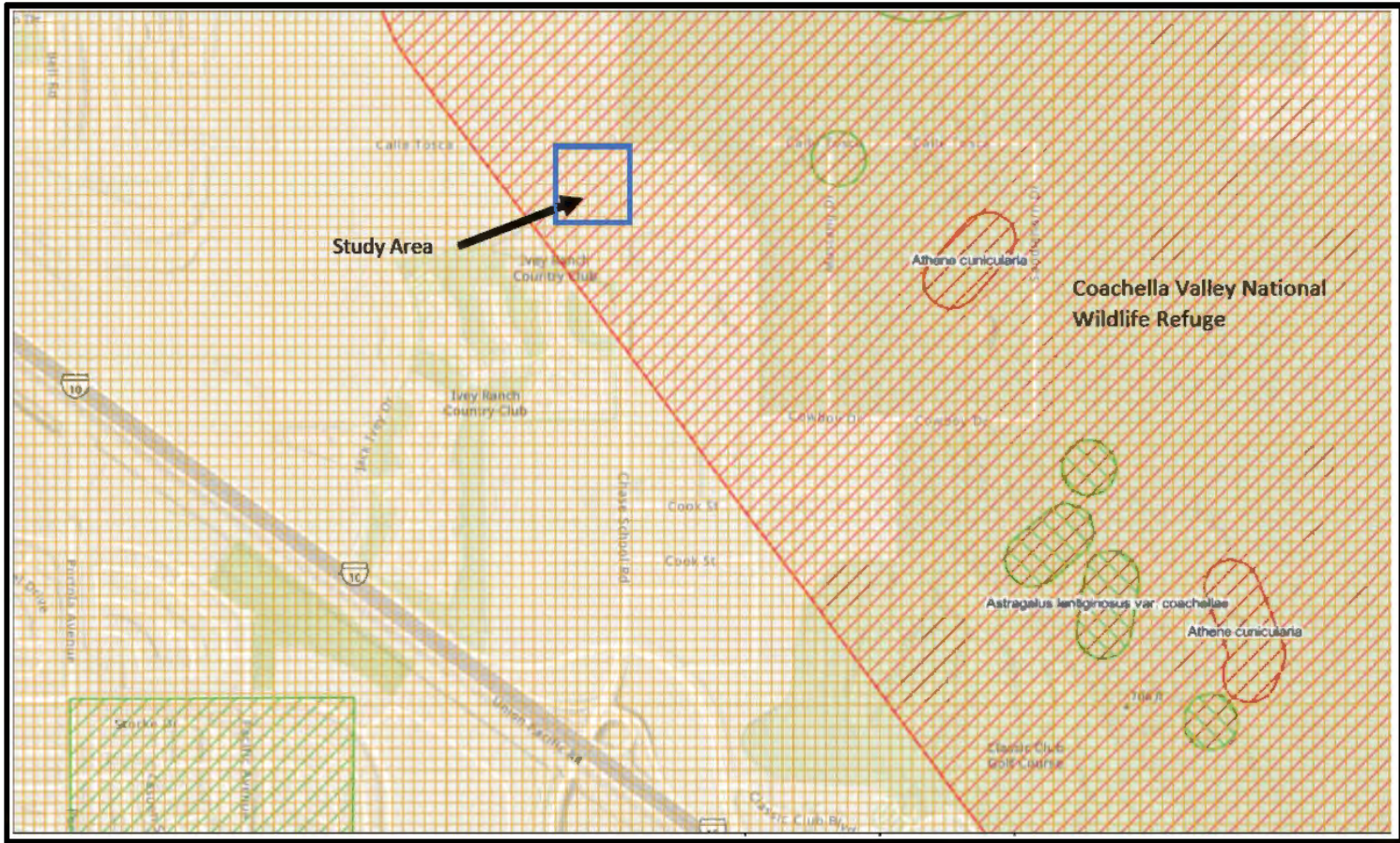


 = PROPOSED

Figure 3b
Existing and Proposed Distribution Lines



Figure 4
Visual Simulation



Legend:



Prairie falcon



Coachella Valley fringed tailed lizard & prairie falcon

Figure 5
CNDDDB Rarefind BIOs Mapping

13. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, has consultation begun? Yes. Letters were sent to the following tribes and or agencies on April 22, 2025.

- Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
- Augustine Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians
- Barona Band of Mission Indians
- Cahuilla Band of Mission Indians
- California Native American Heritage Commission
- Campo Band of Kumeyaay Indians
- Chemehuevi Indian Tribe
- Cocopah Indian Tribe
- Colorado River Indian Tribes
- CRIT Tribal Historic Preservation Office
- Ewilaapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians
- Fort Mojave Indian Tribe
- Fort Yuma Quechen Indian Tribe
- Historic Preservation Office
- Ipay Nation of Santa Ysabel
- Inaja – Cosmit Band of Indians
- Interna-Tribal Cultural Resources Protection Council
- Jamul Indian Village A Kumeyaay Nation
- Kumeyaay Cultural Repatriation Committee
- Kwaaymi Laguna Band of Mission Indians
- La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians
- La Posta Band of Mission Indians
- Los Coyotes Band of Cahuilla & Cupeño Indians
- Manzanita Band of Kumeyaay Nation
- Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians
- Morongo Band of Mission Indians
- Native American Heritage Commission
- Pala Band of Mission Indians
- Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians
- Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians
- Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation (formerly San Manuel Band of Mission Indians)
- San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians
- Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians
- Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians
- Sycuan Band of Kumeyaay Nation
- Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians
- Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians

The comment period ended 30 days after receipt of notification. Comments were received from:

- H. Jill McCormick, M.A., Historic Preservation Office, Ft. Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe (no comment).

-
- Shasta C. Gaughen, PhD, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Pala Band of Mission Indians (The project is within the boundaries of the territory that the tribe considers its Traditional Use Area (TUA). However, they declined AB-52 consultation but did not waive their right to request consultation under other applicable laws in the future.)
 - Brandon Walter, The Cocopah Indian Tribe (The project is not in the Tribe's specific Area of Historic Interest. No further communication to the Cocopah Indian Tribe is requested.)
 - Xitlaly Madrigal, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (Request for consultation, cultural resources inventory, copies of cultural resources documentation, copy of records search).

Note: Conducting consultation early in the CEQA process allows tribal governments, lead agencies, and project proponents to discuss the level of environmental review, identify and address potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources, and reduce the potential for delay and conflict in the environmental review process. (See Public Resources Code, Section 21083.3.2). Information may also be available from the California Native American Heritage Commission's Sacred Lands File per Public Resources Code, Section 5097.96 and the California Historical Resources Information System administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation. Please also note that the Public Resources Code, Section 21082.3 (c) contains provisions specific to confidentiality.

South East Elevation

☉ 302°NW (T) ● 11 N 559818 3740217 ±13ft ▲ 175ft



ericsson-grant, inc.

Cook St. Sub
May 01 2025, 12:07:57 PDT

Photo 1: View to the north from the southern site boundary.

South East Elevation

☉ 324°NW (T) ● 11 N 559848 3740005 ±6ft ▲ 177ft



ericsson-grant, inc.

Cook St. Sub
May 01 2025, 12:14:30 PDT

Photo 2: View to the north from the southeastern corner of the project site.

East Elevation

☉ 259°W (T) ● 11 N 559834 3740356 ±9ft ▲ 181ft



Photo 3: View to the west from the northeastern corner of the project site.

South Elevation

☉ 360°N (T) ● 11 N 559818 3740217 ±13ft ▲ 174ft



Photo 4: View of the northeastern corner of the site from the eastern boundary.



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.


- Aesthetics
- Agriculture/Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology/Soils
- Greenhouse Gas
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Land Use/Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population/Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities/Service Systems
- Wildfire
- Mandatory Findings of Significance

DETERMINATION

After Review of the Initial Study, the IID has:

- Found that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- Found 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.
- Found that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- Found 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.
- Found 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.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE DE MINIMIS IMPACT FINDING: Yes No



Jamie Asbury, General Manager

4-8-26
Date

PROJECT SUMMARY

A. Project Location: The proposed project Cook Street Substation Project (project) is located on Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 694-050-019, which is on the west side of an unpaved portion of Cook Street, approximately 1.1 miles north of Interstate I-10 Freeway in Thousand Palms, California (Figure 1). The proposed substation will be built on approximately 5.75 acres of the parcel (Figure 2 (get parcel map)) and includes the replacement of two existing power poles located within the right-of-way (ROW) along the northern property boundary line and installation of supporting distribution lines.

Project Summary: The Cook Street Substation Project (project) is located within the boundaries of Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 694-050-019 property bounded by an unpaved portion of Cook Street on the east, and open space on the north, west and south. The proposed project will occur in the northeastern portion of the property to be located adjacent to existing transmission lines and include approximately 3.85 miles of new distribution lines.

Project Need: This new substation has been identified as a priority to serve the new development's capacity requirements in this area. Riverside County in the community of Thousand Palms, in addition to the Cities of Rancho Mirage and Palm Desert, are experiencing a high demand for new developments, including affordable housing, with a large amount of loading/capacity requirements. Based on official requests received from Riverside County developments, and the City of Rancho Mirage and Palm Desert capacity requirements amount to at least 78 MVA is needed to serve new developments as hotels, hospitality, hospitals, restaurants, industrial, commercial, and residential subdivisions. This substation has been identified as part of the 10-Year Coachella Valley Transmission/Distribution Expansion Plan, mainly triggered by planned developments in this area

The project includes the following components which are described in greater detail below:

a) Grading of existing site	j) 1200A Capacity circuit breaker (two)
b) 50 Megavolt-Amperes (MVA) transformers (up to three)	k) 2000A Tie circuit breaker
c) Transmission 92-kilovolt (kV) upgrades/line extensions	l) 3000A Miniature circuit breaker (two)
d) Distribution getaways for 12.47 kV distribution circuits (twenty)	m) 15 kV Capacitor banks (two)
e) Conduit and vault systems for distribution getaways	n) Control building
f) 1200 Ampere (A) 92-kV circuit breakers (four)	o) Substation vaults (four)
g) 92-kV Disconnect switches (six)	p) Underground ducts with 6" conduit systems (four)
h) 92-kV Disconnect switches with ground (two)	q) Concrete foundations
i) Distribution buses with 10-1200A feeder breakers (two)	r) Grounding

The new distribution substation will include up to three 50 Megavolt-Ampere (MVA) transformers and 92-kilovolt (kV) transmission line upgrades/extensions which will follow the existing transmission line route. This new substation will also include the implementation of distribution getaways for up to thirty 12.47 kV distribution circuits with conduit and vault systems to be stubbed out for future connections.

Substation: The installation of the new electrical substation includes up to three 50 MVA transformers and facilities that will interconnect with the existing 92-kV transmission system. The work associated to this new

substation requires the design, procurement, and construction of up to three 50 MVA 92/13.2-kV power transformers with associated equipment and the preparations to accommodate a 92-kV transmission line extension, if required. The associated equipment includes four 1200 ampere (A) 92-kV circuit breakers, a 40-kA circuit breaker, six 92-kV disconnect switches, two 92-kV disconnect switches with ground, two distribution buses with ten 1200A feeder breakers, two 1200A capacity circuit breakers, one 2000 A tie CB, two 3000 A miniature circuit breakers, two 15-kV capacitor banks, one control building with relays duplex panel and battery room, four substation vaults, four underground ducts with 6" conduit systems for the IID distribution feeder's getaways to the interconnection point, and a wall fence as per IID Standards. All new equipment will be bonded to a new grounding grid and conduit and grounding shall be extended as required.

The substation site, including all conduit, grounding, switches, and steel structures will be fenced with a masonry wall. The substation will be built with one control building with underground conduits, copper ground grid, all necessary AC and DC panels, a supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) unit, an appropriate battery room with a lead acid battery bank with a battery monitoring system, and a battery charger. All switches, insulators, and surge arrestors will be mounted in hot-deep galvanized steel supports. This proposed substation is planned to be served by the existing 92-kV transmission line that runs in proximity to the substation property line.

Distribution: The distribution feeder getaways include getaways necessary to accommodate twenty to thirty new underground and overhead 12.47 kV distribution circuits. The underground getaway system will consist of up to four vault systems and up to twenty-four 6" polyvinyl chloride (PVC) conduits with an average length of approximately 500 feet for each run from the substation. These getaways will later be used to facilitate connections to separate underground conduit and vault system and/or overhead lines are anticipated to be aligned along existing roadways and/or existing power line corridors as indicated in Figure 3. All duct banks will be installed in a trench from the substation vaults to their proposed locations.

Distribution line installation and upgrades will be necessary to provide service from the proposed substation to existing and future customers of the region. Portions of the area's existing distribution network will need to be upgraded and new power lines will be installed to distribute electricity from the substation. Figures 3a-3b, Existing and Proposed Feeders, depict power distribution lines that will be utilized by the proposed substation. As shown in Figure 3a-3b, there are four segments (Segments A-D) of new distribution lines that are proposed totaling approximately 3.85 miles. The remaining distribution lines shown in Figures 3a-3b are existing and may require the addition of new distribution lines. Underground vaults will be staggered on each route to reduce parkways, easements, and PUEs, including concrete encasement over schedule 40 PVC conduits. The minimum cover for all conduit work will be 48" inches from the top of the conduit to the proposed finished grade. Overhead lines would consist of wood poles approximately 35 to 45 feet tall and overhead conductors spanning approximately two-hundred feet between poles. Installation of new feeder lines on existing poles would not include work that would lead to impacts and are, therefore, not included in this project description.

Transmission: The power line component for the substation of the proposed project would consist of transmission line "in and out" to an existing 92-kV transmission line and V913 distribution circuit under-build to the proposed Cook Street Substation project. The existing overhead power line is located adjacent to the project site, running along the west and north sides of the property. As a part of the proposed Cook Street Substation project, two 75-foot self-supported, dead-end tubular steel poles will be installed to intercept the existing 92-kV transmission line in front of the proposed project site to build the "in and out" interconnection. The 92-kV transmission lines serving this substation will be designed to terminate in two steel "H" frame structures. This would require the removal of two 70-foot, directly buried, tangent wood

poles and the installation of two new, approximately 75-foot, dead-end tubular steel poles. A new 92-kV overhead conductor would be used to connect these new poles to the new and proposed substation, creating the loop-in and out connecting to the distribution lines proposed to be aligned along existing roadways and/or existing power line corridors.

- B. Environmental Setting:** The proposed project site is an undeveloped parcel of desert land and contains sparse vegetation as described in the Biological Resources section and shown in Photos 1 through 6 and Figures 2. Additionally, existing and proposed transmission and distribution lines line the northern and eastern boundaries of the project site and are located throughout the region as shown in Figures 3a-3b.
- C. Analysis:** The project is the grading the site and construction of the proposed electrical substation, supporting transmission and distribution getaways and lines and associated components as detailed above. The analysis contained in this document examines any short-term construction impacts that may occur as a result of the project as well as any long-term operational impacts associated with the operation of the substation.
- D. General Plan Consistency:** The proposed Cook Street Substation project has a residential land use designation, as outlined in the Riverside County General Plan and the Western Coachella Valley Area Plan in Riverside County. The project would not be considered inconsistent as it is a public utility use designed to serve the land designated for residential uses by the Riverside County General Plan.
- E. Evaluation Of Environmental Impacts:**
- 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," as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).

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- 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.
 - 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) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
 - 9) 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 significance.

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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I. AESTHETICS

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista or scenic highway?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project is located at the northeastern corner of the project parcel (APN 694-050-019) as depicted in Figure 2 and runs along the western side of Cook Street. The Ivey Country Club is located to the south and the Duncan Bridge Center and Xavier College Preparatory School are located to the southeast. The surrounding area is characterized by flat topography and urban development to the south and undeveloped desert lands to the west, north and east and is shown in Photos 1 through 6.

There are no Caltrans designated or eligible scenic highways in Thousand Palms (Caltrans, 2025). Per the Riverside County Western Coachella Valley Area Plan, Interstate 10 (I-10) is designated as a County Eligible Scenic Highway (Riverside, 2017). However, the substation portion of the proposed project site is located approximately 1.1 miles to the north of the I-10 and the Ivey Country Club is located in between the interstate and the project site. At this distance, and with the Ivey Country Club in between the viewers and the I-10, the proposed project would not be visible. Segments B, C, of the transmission line portion of the project could also be visible from the I-10 but due to the numerous existing transmission lines throughout the region, the addition of the proposed transmission lines would not result in a substantial change to the visual character and would have a less than significant impact on a scenic vista or scenic highway.

- b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Less than Significant Impact. As described in item “a)” above, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on a scenic vista or scenic highway and the project site does not contain any scenic resources. Therefore, there would be no impact.

- c) In nonurbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

No Impact. The proposed project is immediately to the north of the Ivey Country Club and to the northwest of the Xavier College Preparatory High School in an undeveloped and non-urbanized portion of Thousand Palms. Although the project would develop an electrical substation in an undeveloped area, there are no immediate public views of the project site. Visual simulations prepared for the proposed substation as viewed from the northern end of Cook Street are presented in Figure 4, Visual Simulation. As shown in this exhibit, the distance of the project site from public views and the neutral coloring of the substation materials would not be dramatically noticeable. In addition, proposed transmission lines are an integral part of all surrounding communities

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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infrastructure and due to their prevalence and narrow profile, are not considered a project feature that would substantially degrade existing visual character or the quality of public views. Therefore, no impact is identified for this issue area.

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

No Impact. The project site currently includes overhead power lines but is otherwise undeveloped. The substation development would include all related equipment as described in the project description, including transformers, transmission lines, circuit breakers, and a control building. As a public utility development, this equipment would not produce glare because of the galvanized coating and flat finish appearance on all equipment and apparatuses, and only minimal nighttime lighting would be needed and would only include security lights for nighttime illumination and safety. Lighting would be attached to equipment structures and buildings for maintenance and personnel safety. All lighting would be directed downward and installed in conformance with County standards to avoid light spillage on to adjacent properties. Therefore, no impact is anticipated regarding creating a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day, or nighttime views.

II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY 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. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. 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?

No Impact. The proposed project is designated as Other Land on the Riverside County Important Farmland 2020 Map prepared by the California Department of Conservation (DOC 2020), Division of Land Resource Protection, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP). Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land and does not represent farmland of importance. Proposed segments of new distribution lines are not located on agricultural lands. Thus, the project would no impact on converting Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to a non-agricultural use.

	Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>No Impact. The proposed substation is located on land that is zoned for residential uses and the proposed distribution lines would not be a use that conflicts with agricultural uses. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with any existing Agricultural zoning or surrounding Williamson Act Contracts in non-renewal. The project would have no impact on agricultural zoning or a Williamson Act Contract.</p>				
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>No Impact. Based on the Riverside County General Plan Land Use Element, the project site is not within an area of forest land or zoned for timberland production. No impact would occur.</p>				
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>No Impact. There are no existing forest lands either on-site or within the Thousand Palms area. The proposed project would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land into non-forest use. Therefore, no impact is identified for this issue area.</p>				
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>No Impact. As discussed in items “c” and “d” above, the proposed project would not result in the conversion of farmland to a non-agricultural use. Therefore, the project would not involve other changes in the existing environment that would result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur.</p>				

III. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to the following determinations. Would the Project:

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

Less than Significant Impact. The project site is within the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The proposed project includes the installation of an electrical substation and the associated connection and distribution equipment. Equipment used during construction would include boom trucks, bucket trucks, wire pulling trailers, rope pulling trailers, water truck, pickup truck, material handling trailers. The equipment would operate intermittently and continuously over a six-

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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to ten-month construction period. Short-term air quality emissions would be generated during construction activities in association with operation of heavy equipment to install the facilities. Once operational, the project would not generate additional emissions. The project would be subject to compliance with SCAQMD Regulation XVI – Mobile Source Offset Programs. Once operational, the project would generate minimal emissions but would be required to comply with SCAQMD Regulation IX Standards of Performance for New Stationary Sources. The project will comply with all applicable SCAQMD Rules and Regulations as well as with all applicable State and federal requirements for attainment of air quality objectives. Therefore, the project’s impact regarding conflicting with or obstructing implementation of an applicable air quality plan is considered less than significant.

- b) 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?

Less than Significant Impact. As noted in item “a),” above, the project site is within the SCAQMD. The South Coast Air Basin is classified as an “extreme” nonattainment area and the Coachella Valley is classified as a “severe-15” nonattainment area for the 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard. This means that the background levels of ozone are at times higher than the ambient air quality standards. The air quality standards were set to protect the health of sensitive individuals (i.e., elderly, children, and the sick). Therefore, when the concentration of those pollutants exceeds the standard, it is likely that sensitive individuals of the population may experience adverse health effects. Table AQ-1 summarizes construction and operational limits for criteria pollutants.

**Table AQ-1
SCAQMD Air Quality Significance Thresholds**

Pollutant	Construction	Operation
NOx	100 lbs/day	55 lbs/day
VOC	75 lbs/day	55 lbs/day
PM ₁₀	150 lbs/day	150 lbs/day
PM _{2.5}	55 lbs/day	55 lbs/day
SOx	150 lbs/day	150 lbs/day
CO	550 lbs/day	550 lbs/day
Lead	3 lbs/day	3 lbs/day

Source: SCAQMD CEQA Handbook, 1993.

Equipment used during construction would include boom trucks, bucket trucks, wire pulling trailers, rope pulling trailers, water truck, pickup truck, material handling trailers. The equipment would operate intermittently and continuously over a six- to ten-month construction period. Due to the minimal construction activities required to complete the proposed facilities, no localized significance threshold would be exceeded during project operations. Therefore, the proposed project would not 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.

The substation would not be permanently staffed and would be operated by IID remotely. IID maintenance employees would visit approximately twice per month to conduct routine checks and maintenance. These ongoing activities would generate nominal air pollutant emissions and would

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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not generate substantial emissions of criteria pollutants or precursors. In addition, substation operation would not involve the use of stationary sources of criteria pollutants or precursors. Therefore, operations would not generate emissions exceeding SCAQMD thresholds (see Table AQ-1), and operation of the Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact on regional air quality.

- c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less than Significant Impact. Single family residences in the Ivey Ranch Country Club are located approximately 550 feet south of the proposed Cook Street Substation development area. The Xavier College Preparatory High School is located approximately 0.3 miles to the southeast. Portions of the proposed distribution lines have the potential to be located in close proximity to residential uses.

The amount of construction emissions generated would be very limited and for a short duration as the equipment would operate intermittently and continuously over a six- to ten-month construction period. Based on the distance to the sensitive receptors, the limited duration of construction, and the fact that Best Management Practices (SCAQMD Regulation XVI – Mobile Source Offset Programs) such as watering to control dust, stopping activities when wind speeds exceed 20 mph, etc., sensitive receptors would not be exposed to prolonged or substantial pollutant concentrations. Therefore, the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts regarding exposing sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

- d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

Less than Significant Impact. Potential odor impacts depend on multiple factors including the type of odor generated; the intensity of the source; the sensitivity of the receptor; the intensity of the source; and the direction and speed of the wind. Odors present a nuisance to the public and result in citizen complaints. During construction, exhaust from equipment (trucks, earthmoving equipment) may produce odors typically resulting from dust and heavy equipment exhaust. Odors produced during construction consist of unburned hydrocarbons from tailpipes of construction equipment. Equipment emission odors typically disperse rapidly and do not affect substantial numbers of people due to the localized area affected. Additionally, the closest sensitive receptors to the proposed substation are approximately 550 feet and 0.3 miles to the south and southeast, respectively. At this distance from the potential odor source, odors which could be adversely affecting a substantial number of people is considered less than significant.

IV. **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

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

- a) **Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated.** The following discussion is based on the *Biological Resource Assessment for the Imperial Irrigation District, Cook Substation Project, Thousand Palms, California* prepared for the project by Argonaut Ecological Consulting, Inc. (Appendix A). Argonaut prepared a biological resource assessment of the 5.75-acre development site (i.e., “Study Area”) and a 500-foot radius around the Study Area for the proposed Cook Street Substation as depicted in Figure 2, Project Development Area. Potential distribution line routes were excluded from the Study Area survey but are considered in the assessment of impacts, given the identical habitat considerations as the Survey Area. The evaluation relied on available literature, aerial photography, historic topographic and aerial maps, and a field investigation. The field investigation was conducted on July 25, 2025 and included the areas of the proposed substation site, an existing access road/trail, and the area immediately north of the substation site and was surveyed using a 5-yard grid pattern to provide for full coverage and included an approximately 500-foot survey radius.

Sometime before 1941, the area south of the study area was used as farmland (unspecified) and Highway 10 had been constructed. By 1984 residential development was constructed on the lands to the west and south (north/east of Highway 10). Sometime before 1996, the Ivy Ranch residential development and golf course had been built on the lands between the study area and Highway 10, however, the study area has remained undeveloped. There is a transmission line along the northern boundary of the study area, and a fence line along east side of the study area. Around 2006, a large school (Xavier College Preparatory High School) was constructed immediately southeast of the study area, on the east side of Cook St. and a community event building (Duncan Bridge Center) was constructed north of the school. There are access trails and off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails that bisect the study area through the center and along the eastern and northern edges. As observed during the site walk, portions of the site are used by a scattered homeless population. A few tents, debris, and other signs of encampment was observed, as well as individuals walking through the site.

The Study Area lies within the community of Thousand Palms, which is an unincorporated community in Riverside County. Riverside County is signatory to the Coachella Valley Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) and the study area lies within the boundary of the CVMSHCP but is outside any designated Conservation Area, so no consistency review is required. The nearest conservation area within the CVSMHCP is the Thousand Palms Conservation Area located immediately east of the Study Area (the conservation area near the Study Area is fenced) and the Coachella Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Payment of a mitigation fee or in-lieu payment fee may be required for any portion of the proposed project that was not disturbed prior to 1996. However, based on survey results and aerial photographs it appears the project site has been historically disturbed from infrastructure development (transmission line, access road, laydown for construction, etc.). Therefore, the proposed project would not be subject to payment of CVSMHCP mitigation fees.

The Study Area lies within the Colorado Desert (which is part of the Sonoran Desert). CALVEG maps the Study Area as “barren,” which, not surprisingly, indicates there is no vegetative community present, but that is accurate given there is a plant community, albeit sparse. Based on aerial photographs, it appears portions of the Study Area have been disturbed (and portions disturbed

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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prior to 1996) from infrastructure development (transmission line, access road, laydown for construction, etc.).

The habitat would best be characterized and disturbed/active desert sand fields. There are sparse patches of vegetation that includes desert twinbugs (*Dicoria canescens*), Russian thistle (*Kali tragus sp.*), blue palo verde (*Cercidium floridum*), and kelch grass (*Schismus sp.*). Some honey mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) was found immediately south of the Study Area in a low lying swale. No wetland features exist within the Study Area or along the access and distribution corridors. No wetland or other aquatic features are mapped by the National Wetland Inventory.

A query of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) was performed to determine which special status species could be present within the Study Area. The CNDDDB Bios mapping is shown in Figure 5, CNDDDB Rarefind BIOs Mapping. This map shows the location of known records of special status species near the Study Area, and Table BIO-1 includes a summary of the CNDDDB query result, listing status and the potential impacts and potential for occurrence within the Study Area.

No critical habitat exists for any species within the Study Area, however, critical habitat for two species occurs immediately east of the Study Area: Coachella Valley milk vetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus var. coachellae*), which is listed as Federally endangered and the Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard (*Uma inornate*), which is also listed as endangered. The critical habitat designation for both species is located immediately east of the Study Area within the Coachella Valley National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). The Refuge supports habitat for other species, such as the flat-tailed horned lizard (*Phrynosoma mcallii*). The Study Area and the Refuge are separated by a small embankment and chain link fence. The Refuge is known to support numerous species covered in the CVHCP. The Study Area is located outside any designated conservation areas but is located within an urbanized area within the CVHCP boundary.

The CNDDDB identifies two species that are identified as potentially present: prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*) and the flat-tailed horned lizard (*Phrynosoma mcallii*). There are no specific records within the Study Area for either species, but the Study Area is included within a radius of a record(s) within the Refuge for these species.

The amount of existing and recurring disturbance within the Study Area (off road trail, access road, encampments, etc.) and distribution corridors limit the habitat value of the Study Area. Numerous species included in the CVHCP are known to occur surrounding the Study Area, but there are no known records of these species within or near the Study Area. In addition, the Study Area does not have any published or unpublished CNDDDB records for any species of concern. The Study Area may provide some marginal suitable habitat, for any species of concern, but no occurrence of occupation was found during the field survey.

**Table BIO-1
Summary of Special Status Species, Potential Occurrence, and Impact**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Effects¹	Potential Occurrence in the Study Area
Mammals				
Pallid San	<i>Chaetodipus fallax</i>	--/--	NE	Absent. Prefers rocky/gravelly

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Diego pocket mouse	<i>pallidus</i>			areas with yucca overstory, and in desert scrub near or in pine-juniper belt. No suitable habitat present.
Earthquake Merriam's kangaroo rat	<i>Dipodomys merriami collinus</i>	--/--	NE	Likely absent. Merriam's kangaroo rat can be found in chaparral and Coastal scrub habitat. No records within the vicinity of the Study Area..
Palm Springs pocket mouse	<i>Perognathus longimembris bangsi</i>	--/-- SSC	NE	Absent. Grassland and alkali desert scrub habitat. Suitable habitat is not present.
Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel	<i>Oerospermophilus tereticaudus chlorus</i>	-/--	NE	Absent. No ground squirrels were observed within the Study Area, and no suitable habitat was present.
Birds				
Burrowing owl	<i>Athenea cunicularia</i>	--/-- SSC	NE	Absent. Associated with ground burrowing mammals (i.e., ground squirrels). No ground squirrels or underground burrows (or suitable nesting areas) are found within the Study Area.
Southwestern willow flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	FE/CE	NE	Absent. Found in open semiarid grasslands and
Prairie falcon	<i>Falco mexicanus</i>	--/--	NE	Absent. Medium sized falcon which is typically nonmigratory. Nests in cliffs but forage over a wide area with suitable prey. No suitable nesting habitat within or near the Study Area.
Loggerhead shrike	<i>Lanis ludovicianus</i>	--/--	NE	Absent. Occurs in open country with scattered shrubs and trees. Occurs throughout California but regionally declining in some areas. Species breeds mainly in scrublands or open woodlands with a fair amount of grass cover and bare ground. No evidence of occupation was found.
Amphibians, Reptiles, and Invertebrates				
Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard	<i>Uma Inornata</i>	FT/CE	NE	Potentially Present. Species restricted to habitats with fine, windblown sand deposits in the sandy plains—present within the Coachella Valley. Marginal habitat in small areas potentially present within the Study Area..
Cheeseweed owl	<i>Oliarces clara</i>	--/--	NE	Absent. Only known from a few locations in California. Larva associated with roots of creosote bush. Species likely not present.

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Flat-tailed horned lizard	<i>Phrynosoma mcallii</i>	--/-- SSC	NE	Potentially Present. Typical habitat is sandy desert hardpan or gravel flats with scattered, sparse vegetation. Suitable habitat is present within the Study Area, but no evidence of occupation was found.
Coachella giant sand treader cricket	<i>Macrobaenetes vaigum</i>	--/--	NE	Likely absent. According to the Coachella giant sand treader cricket model, with one occurrence south of the Study Area and west of Indio. Occurs on wind swept ridges. The Study Area is not predicated within the Study Area based on the Coachella Valley giant sand treader cricket habitat model
Algodones supargia	<i>Euparagla unidenta</i>	--/--	NE	Likely Absent. Record from 1973 and little information about potential occurrence within the Study Area.

Source: Argonaut 2025, p. 14-15.

1 Status= Listing of special status species, unless otherwise indicated

- CE: California listed as Endangered
- CT: California listed as Threatened
- CC: California candidate species
- SSC: California Species of Special Concern
- FE: Federally listed as Endangered
- FT: Federally listed as Threatened

2 Effects = Effect determination

- NE: No Effect
- ME: May Effect, not likely to adversely affect

3 Species are not included within the CNDDB Query but are included in the IPaC data query.

Definition of Occurrence Indicators:

Absent/Likely Absent: Species not recorded in Study Area suitable or critical habitat components are absent.

Based on habitat requirements and the occurrence of records within the Refuge, the Study Area may provide some marginal suitable habitat for Coachella Valley flat-tailed horned lizard and Coachella Valley fringed-toed lizard. However, no evidence of occupation by these species was found during the grid survey, and the likelihood of presence is considered low given the availability of high-quality suitable habitat within the adjacent Refuge.

The areas of new proposed distribution lines depicted in Figures 3a-3b, mostly occur along existing roadways and/or existing power line corridors adjacent to developed areas. Portions of the proposed distribution lines will be new line segments or upgraded existing lines as needed on existing poles with the possibility of pole replacements as/if needed or in underground conduit in trench.

Although the chances of substantial adverse effects to special status species is considered low, there is still a possibility that through the construction of the substation and installation of new distribution lines, impacts to wildlife could occur. Therefore, impacts to special status animals is

considered potentially significant unless mitigation is incorporated. With the implementation of BIO-1 and BIO-2, preconstruction surveys and adherence to buffer protocols, if necessary, would reduce potential impacts to special status animals to a level that is less than significant.

Special Status Plant Species

The physical components and land use strongly influence the types of plants present. Table BIO-2 provides a summary of special status plants but is not an exhaustive inventory of plants present. As shown, of the seven species identified, none were present in the Study Area.

**Table BIO-2
Summary of Special Status Plants, Potential Occurrence, and Impact**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status¹	Effects²	Potential Occurrence in the Study Area
Chaparral sand-verbena	<i>Abronia villosa</i> <i>var. aurita</i>	--/-- 1B.1	NE	Absent. No individuals observed and the majority of the Study Area is disturbed.
Coachella Valley milk-vetch	<i>Astragalus lentiginosus</i> <i>var. coachellae</i>	FE/-- 1B.2		
Gravel milk-vetch	<i>Astragalus sabulonum</i>	--/--		
Triple-ribbed milk vetch	<i>Astragalus tricarinatus</i>	FE/-- 1B.2		
Booth's eveningprimrose	<i>Eremothera boothii</i> ssp. <i>boothii</i>	--/-- 2B.2		
Abrams' spurge	<i>Euphorbia abramsiana</i>	--/-- 2B.2		
Arizona spurge	<i>Euphorbia arizonica</i>	--/-- 2B.3		
Flat-seeded spurge	<i>Euphorbia platysperma</i>	--/-- 1B.2		
Narrow-leaf sandpaper plant	<i>Petalonyxlinearis</i>	--/-- 2B.3		
Mecca-aster	<i>Xylorhiza cognata</i>	--/-- 1B.2		

Source: Argonaut 2025, p. 15.

¹Status= Listing of special status species, unless otherwise indicated

FE: Federally listed as Endangered

1B.X California Native Plant Society, Rare Plant Ranking

Plants with a California Rare Plant Rank of 1B are rare throughout their range, with most endemic to California. Most of the plants that are ranked 1B have declined significantly over the last century.

California Rare Plant Rank of 2B is rare in California but standard in other states.

²Effects = Effect determination

NE: No Effect

Definition of Occurrence Indicators:

Absent/Likely Absent: Species not recorded in Study Area and suitable or critical habitat components are absent.

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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Source: CNDDDB = California Natural Diversity Database provided by CDFG and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC). Accessed online in July, 2024.

The areas of new proposed distribution lines depicted in Figures 3a-3b, mostly occur along existing roadways and/or existing power line corridors adjacent to developed areas. Portions of the proposed distribution lines will be new line segments or upgraded existing lines as needed on existing poles with the possibility of pole replacements as/if needed or underground conduit in trench. Given the lack of suitable vegetative habitat and absence of sensitive plants during surveys, impacts to special status plants during the construction of the substation and installation of new distribution lines is considered low.

Although the chances of substantial adverse effects to special status species is considered low, there is still a possibility that through the construction of the substation and installation of new distribution lines, impacts to habitat could occur. Therefore, impacts to special status plant species is considered potentially significant unless than mitigation is incorporated. With the implementation of BIO -1 and BIO-2, preconstruction surveys and adherence to buffer protocols, if necessary, would reduce potential impacts to special status plants to a level that is less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

MM BIO-1 Preconstruction Resource Survey. Three days prior to any ground disturbing activities or vegetation removal related to the substation construction or distribution line installation, a qualified biologist shall conduct a preconstruction survey to identify any sensitive biological resource to flag for avoidance. Any sensitive species that may be present within the Project area shall be relocated outside of the impact areas.

Timing/Implementation: Three days prior to the initiation of any on-site grading.
Enforcement/Monitoring: Biological Monitor and Imperial Irrigation District.

MM BIO-2 Preconstruction Nesting Bird Survey. If construction or other project activities are scheduled to occur during the bird breeding season (Typically February 1 through August 31 for raptors and March 15 through August 31 for the majority of migratory bird species), a pre-construction nesting-bird survey should be conducted by a qualified avian biologist to ensure that active bird nests, including those for the black-tailed gnatcatcher, burrowing owl, and loggerhead strike, will not be disturbed or destroyed. The survey should be completed no more than three days prior to the initial ground disturbance. The nesting-bird survey should include the Project Area and adjacent areas where project activities have the potential to affect active nests, either directly or indirectly due to construction activity or noise. If an active nest is identified, the biologist should establish an appropriately sized disturbance limit buffer around the nest using flagging or staking. Construction activities should not occur within any disturbance limit buffer zones until the nest is deemed inactive by the qualified biologist.

Timing/Implementation: Construction activities scheduled to occur during the breeding season and 3 days prior to vegetation removal.
Enforcement/Monitoring: Biological Monitor and Imperial Irrigation District.

	Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
<p>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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>No Impact. As discussed under item “a)” above, no wetland features were found during the project survey and no wetland or other aquatic features are mapped by the National Wetland Inventory (Argonaut, 2025, p. 12). Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community.</p>				
<p>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?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>No Impact. For purposes of the biological resource assessment, wetland habitat includes those areas considered “Waters of the U.S.” by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) or Waters of the State of California. No wetland features exist within the Study Area (Argonaut 2025, p. 12). As discussed under item “b)” above, no wetland or other aquatic features are mapped by the National Wetland Inventory. Therefore, the project would have no impact on federally protected wetlands.</p>				
<p>d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any 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?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>No Impact. Wildlife corridors are linear features that connect large patches of natural open space and provide avenues for the migration of animals. The Study Area does not provide any wildlife movement or corridor functions due to existing disturbances related to human presence, surrounding roadways, traffic and noise disturbances that preclude or dissuade wildlife from utilizing the Study Area. Many of the species that are commonly found in urban environments, such as those within the Study Area, do not have specific movement corridor requirements but instead use non-specific movement patterns across these urban areas. Based on the lack of migratory corridors in the Study Area, no impact would occur.</p>				
<p>e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinance protecting biological resource, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>No Impact. See discussion under item “a)” above.</p>				
<p>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?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated. The substation portion of the project is

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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in the boundaries of the CVMSHCP but is outside any designated Conservation Area. The CVMSHCP identifies specific activities/lands operated/managed by the IID that are covered by the HCP (i.e., subject to the HCP). The activities included in the proposed project are included within the IID “covered activities” identified by the CVMSHCP. As a covered activity located outside designated conservation areas, construction of the proposed project is expected to implement the applicable regulatory compliance measures described in Section 4.4 of the CVMSHCP, included as an appendix to the Biological Report (Appendix A). All new and upgrades to distribution lines would occur outside the HCP. Therefore, with implementation of mitigation measures BIO-1 and BIO-2 the project would not conflict with the provisions of any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Conservation Community Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state conservation plan and impacts are considered potentially significant unless mitigation is incorporated.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?

No Impact. The following discussion is based on the *Cultural Resource Assessment for the Proposed Cook Substation Imperial Irrigation District Project* prepared by Peak & Associates, Inc. (Appendix B). The assessment includes a records search through the South Coast Information Center (August, 2025) and a field survey of the Study Area.

For the purposes of CEQA, an historical resource is a resource listed in, or determined eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. When a project will impact a site, it needs to be determined whether the site is an historical resource.

A field survey was conducted of the Study Area by Melinda Peak on July 13, 2025 using complete coverage with 10-15 meter wide transects. Potential distribution line routes were excluded from the Study Area survey but are considered in the assessment of impacts. The parcel is open white sand, with scattered bushes. The land has several road tracks crossing it. No other historical or prehistoric artifacts, features of other cultural remains were observed during the survey. The land contained many food wrappers scattered about, likely related to the ongoing camping of homeless people on the property. It can be concluded that there are no resources are present in the Study Area, and therefore no properties eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources within the Study Area.

Proposed distribution line installation and upgrades would occur along existing roadways and/or existing power line corridors, of which will be upgraded as needed on existing poles/lines and the possible pole replacement as/if needed or in underground conduit in trench. All of the upgrades will follow existing road rights-of-way offered for dedication and would not contain historical resources.

Therefore, there would be no substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. No impact would occur.

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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- b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?

Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated. A field survey of the parcel was conducted of the Study Area Peak & Associates. The parcel is open white sand, with scattered bushes. The land has several road tracks crossing it. No other historical or prehistoric artifacts, features of other cultural remains were observed during the survey. The land contained many food wrappers scattered about, likely related to the ongoing camping of homeless people on the property. However, excavations for the proposed substation and associated distribution line installation/upgrades have the potential to disturb previously unknown archaeological resources and, therefore, is potentially significant unless mitigation is incorporated.

Mitigation Measures

MM CUL-1 Worker Environmental Awareness Program. Prior to the initiation of any on-site grading, all construction/contractor personnel working on site must complete training through a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) to educate personnel of potential cultural resources that could be exposed during construction. New construction workers engaged in construction activities (e.g., grading, utility installation, etc.) shall complete WEAP training within the first week of deployment on the site. Additionally, operational staff shall complete WEAP training prior to deployment on the site.

Timing/Implementation: Prior to the initiation of any on-site grading.
Enforcement/Monitoring: Project contractor.

MM CUL-2 Archaeological Discovery. In the event that archaeological resources (sites, features, or artifacts) are exposed during construction activities for the Project, all construction work occurring within 100 feet of the find shall immediately stop until a qualified archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards can evaluate the significance of the find and determine whether or not additional study is warranted. If the discovery is clearly not significant (e.g., an isolate) the archaeologist may simply record the finding and allow work to continue. If the discovery proves potentially significant under CEQA, additional work such as preparation of an archaeological treatment plan, testing, or data recovery may be warranted.

Timing/Implementation: During construction involving drilling or excavations to depths of 3 feet or more.
Enforcement/Monitoring: Archaeological Monitor and Imperial Irrigation District.

- c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated. As described in item b) above, due to the condition of the project site, it is not likely that human remains would be found on the project site based on lack of water resources and of disturbance. However, depending on the depth of excavation, there is potential for previously unknown human remains to be present. This impact would be reduced to less than significant with the implementation of mitigation measure CUL-3

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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below.

Mitigation Measures

MM CUL-3 Human Remains Discovery. If subsurface deposits believed to be cultural or human in origin are discovered during construction, all work must halt within a 100-foot radius of the discovery. A qualified professional archaeologist, meeting the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards for prehistoric and historic archaeology, shall be retained to evaluate the significance of the find, and shall have the authority to modify the no-work radius as appropriate, using professional judgment. The following notifications shall apply, depending on the nature of the find:

- If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does not represent a cultural resource, work may resume immediately, and no agency notifications are required.
- If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does represent a cultural resource from any period or cultural affiliation, the archaeologist shall immediately notify the lead agencies. The agencies shall consult on a finding of eligibility and implement appropriate treatment measures, if the find is determined to be a Historical Resource under CEQA, as defined in Section 15064.5(a) of the CEQA Guidelines or a historic property under Section 106 NHPA, if applicable. Work may not resume within the no-work radius until the lead agencies, through consultation as appropriate, determine that the site either: 1) is not a Historical Resource under CEQA or a Historic Property under Section 106; or 2) that the treatment measures have been completed to their satisfaction.
- If the find includes human remains, or remains that are potentially human, they shall ensure reasonable protection measures are taken to protect the discovery from disturbance (AB 2641). The archaeologist shall notify the Imperial County Medical Examiner (per Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code). The provisions of Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.98 of the California PRC, and AB 2641 will be implemented. If the coroner determines the remains are Native American and not the result of a crime scene, the coroner will notify the NAHC, which then will designate a Native American Most Likely Descendant (MLD) for the project (Section 5097.98 of the PRC). The designated MLD will have 48 hours from the time access to the property is granted to make recommendations concerning treatment of the remains. If the landowner does not agree with the recommendations of the MLD, the
- NAHC can mediate (Section 5097.94 of the PRC). If no agreement is reached, the landowner must rebury the remains where they will not be further disturbed (Section 5097.98 of the PRC). This will also include either recording the site with the NAHC or the appropriate Information Center; using an open space or conservation zoning designation or easement; or recording a reinternment document with the county in which the property is located (AB 2641). Work may not resume within the no-work radius until the lead agencies, through consultation as appropriate, determine that the treatment measures have been completed to their satisfaction.

Timing/Implementation: As needed during grading and construction.
Enforcement/Monitoring: Imperial Irrigation District.

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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VI. ENERGY

Would the project:

- a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation.

Less than Significant Impact. The project is proposed to address the future reliability of the utility and would not involve significant resource consumption of electricity or natural gas. This analysis focuses on the consumption or use of fuels associated with construction, operation, and maintenance of the project. The project would utilize energy mainly in the form of fuel consumed during construction. Operation and maintenance of the substation would require a negligible amount of on-site electricity for integration of the substation elements, such as security lighting. Fuels would also be utilized periodically to maintain equipment during operation.

The project is intended to expand the electrical load capacity of the local electrical grid in order to accommodate planned, future growth in the area. Therefore, the project would increase the reliability of energy services in the region. Due to the project's increase in the reliability of energy services and increase in electrical load capacity, the project would aid IID and local jurisdictions in meeting peak energy demand in its service area. While the project would increase the electrical load capacity as it will supply and distribute electricity to consumers, it would not result in an increase in per capita energy consumption or result in the inefficient use of energy, such as a new residential or commercial development would. The project would not alter the mix of power sources used by IID and would not directly or indirectly increase reliance on natural gas and oil or decrease reliance on renewable energy resources

Construction equipment, haul trucks, and worker vehicles would consume fuel during project construction. Due to the small size of the project and the small construction crew required for the project, the consumption of fuel energy during construction would be temporary, localized, and would not represent a significant amount of fuel. Vehicles used for project construction and operation would be required to comply with all federal and state efficiency standards. Additionally, there are no project characteristics or features that would be inefficient or that would result in the use of equipment and vehicles in a manner that would less energy efficient than similar projects.

Operation of the project would require a negligible amount of energy. Security and safety lighting would only be used when nighttime access for maintenance activities would be required. Some amount of gasoline would be consumed by worker vehicles conducting maintenance. However, the amount of fuel required for such routine maintenance would be minimal. Neither project construction or operation would have an adverse impact on energy consumption or conservation. Additionally, the project would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Impacts would be less than significant.

- b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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No Impact. The project would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency as it would include the construction of a new three transformer electrical substation. The project’s construction would employ efficient vehicles that would be in compliance with CARB standards. The project would not require a large fleet of equipment or staff for construction or operation. The project would involve upgrading facilities for energy distribution and would not include generation or alter the existing source portfolio at the state or local level, which includes a variety of renewable energy sources. The end goal of the project is to make the IID electrical system more dependable and less vulnerable to overload and potential blackouts and energy conveyed through the facility would comply with IID’s Renewable Portfolio Standards and other applicable obligations with respect to renewable energy and energy efficiency, thus, the project would have no impact as it would not conflict with state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Less than Significant Impact. According to Department of Conservation, Geologic Survey, 2024. EQ Zapp: California Earthquake Hazards Zone Application (DOC, 2024), there are no designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake fault zones that traverse the proposed project area. The San Andreas Fault is the closest fault and is approximately two miles to the northeast. Given the distance, the potential for rupture is not likely. Additionally, all IID equipment and transmission infrastructure must be designed in accordance with the most current edition of the Uniform Building Code (UBC) and the California Building Code (CBC) as applicable to withstand seismic hazards. Compliance with these codes is considered sufficient to prevent substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death and is considered a less than significant impact.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ii.) Strong Seismic ground shaking? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

Less than Significant Impact. The primary seismic hazard at the project site is the potential for strong ground shaking during earthquakes along the San Andreas Fault. The project site is approximately two miles from the San Andreas fault and is located in areas identified with moderate and high ground shaking risks. The proposed project does not include habitable structures that could be damaged in a seismic event and consists of replacing existing poles and upgrading existing substation equipment. Additionally, all IID equipment and transmission

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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infrastructure must be designed in accordance with the most current edition of the UBC and the CBC as applicable to withstand seismic hazards. Compliance with these codes is considered sufficient to address seismic hazards. Thus, impacts resulting from strong seismic shaking are considered less than significant.

- iii.) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less than Significant Impact. Liquefaction occurs when granular soil below the water table is subjected to vibratory motions, such as those produced by earthquakes. According to the Riverside County General Plan, Safety Element (Riverside, 2024a), the project site is not located in a liquefaction zone. The Riverside County Parcel Report (Riverside, 2025) identified the project site as having a moderate potential for liquefaction but as the proposed project is the construction of a three-transformer electrical substation and does not house people, the project would not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects from seismic-related ground failure. The impact would be less than significant.

- iv.) Landslides?

No Impact. According to the United States Geologic Survey (USGS), U.S. Landslide Inventory and Susceptibility Map (USGS, 2025) the project site is located in an area with very low landslide potential as it can be characterized by flat terrain. Therefore, no impact would occur regarding landslides.

- b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project includes include excavation, grading, trenching, backfilling, and other construction work required for the construction of a new three transformer electrical substation and supporting distribution lines. This work could result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil via wind and by surface water runoff during storms. The runoff could cause erosion and increase sedimentation and transport of pollutants offsite, potentially affecting water quality. To minimize soil erosion, IID would comply with current state and local stormwater regulations and because the site is over one acre would be required to prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for the project, and would include implementation of stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs), and other erosion and sediment control measures. Implementation of these regulatory requirements would reduce the impact to less than significant with mitigation

- 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 off-site landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

Less than Significant Impact. Construction activities would not result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse. There are no landslide-related hazards identified in the project area, as the surrounding landscape is relatively flat. The project would not include groundwater withdrawal or pumping; therefore, it would not cause subsidence in the project

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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area. Additionally, the project area is not within an area known to pose any risks related to liquefaction or lateral spreading, as any seismic-related ground shaking would have little effect in the project area. Additionally, the project must comply with the UBC and CBC to ensure the structures are designed in accordance with geologic and seismic conditions. Concrete and steel structures must follow standard IEEE-693: recommended Practice for Seismic Design of Substations. Compliance with mandatory design and building requirements will reduce potential impacts associated with construction on an unstable geologic unit to less than significant.

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

Less than Significant Impact. The project site area consists of Myoma soils, which is not considered an expansive soil (USDA 2023). It is a soil that is characterized as somewhat excessively drained, with very slow runoff, and rapid permeability, making it unable to undergo significant volume changes (shrink or swell) (USDA 2015). Therefore, the potential for soil expansion within the project site is considered low and the risk to life or property is less than significant.

- 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?

No Impact. The proposed project does not propose new septic tanks or an alternative wastewater disposal system. The facility would continue to operate using the existing septic system. No impact would occur.

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

Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed project includes the construction of a new three-transformer electrical substation and supporting distribution lines. The project consists of undisturbed vacant land that is flat with no distinguishing geologic features. Thus, no unique aboveground geologic features are present. The Riverside County Parcel Report (Riverside, 2025) identified the project site as having a low potential for paleontological sensitivity. However, excavations for the construction of the electrical substation, pole replacements/installations, and associated trenching for conduits have the potential to disturb previously unknown paleontological resources which could lead to potentially significant impacts unless mitigation is incorporated. As previously unknown paleontological resources present, the potential exists for damage during construction activities. Therefore, impacts to paleontological resources are considered potentially significant unless mitigation is incorporated.

Mitigation Measures

MM GEO-1: Paleontological Resource Discovery. In the event that unanticipated paleontological resources or unique geologic resources are encountered during ground disturbing activities, work must cease within 50 feet of the discovery and a paleontologist shall be hired to assess the scientific significance of the find. The

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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consulting paleontologist shall have knowledge of local paleontology, and the minimum levels of experience and expertise as defined by the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology's Standard Procedures for the Assessment and Mitigation of Adverse Impacts to Paleontological Resources. If any paleontological resources or unique geologic features are encountered within the project site, the consulting paleontologist shall prepare a Paleontological Treatment and Monitoring Plan to include the methods that will be used to protect paleontological resources that may exist within the project site, as well as procedures for monitoring, fossil preparation and identification, curation of specimens into an accredited repository, and preparation of a report at the conclusion of the monitoring program.

Timing/Implementation: During construction involving drilling or excavations to depths of 3 feet or more.

Enforcement/Monitoring: Paleontological Monitor and Imperial Irrigation District.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

- a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project includes the construction of a new three-transformer electrical substation and supporting distribution line upgrades/installation. Greenhouse gases (GHG) are generated by heavy equipment used during construction. Equipment used during construction would include boom trucks, bucket trucks, wire pulling trailers, rope pulling trailers, water truck, pickup truck, material handling trailers. The equipment would operate intermittently and continuously over a six- to ten-month construction period. Based on the limited duration of the project as well as mandatory compliance with SCAQMD rules (i.e., Rule 900, Procedures for issuing permits to operate for sources subject to title V of the federal clean air act amendments of 1990), the project is not anticipated to generate substantial GHGs. Therefore, generation of greenhouse gas emissions would be considered a less than significant impact.

- b) Conflict with an applicable plan or policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Less than Significant Impact. The Riverside County Climate Action Plan (CAP) was first adopted in 2019 and considers emissions reductions from various policies across several Elements, including Land Use, Air Quality, Circulation, Multipurpose Open Space, and Safety. The County is undergoing an update in 2025 in order to refine the County's efforts to meet GHG reduction strategies, specifically for the years 2035 and 2050. The 2025 CAP Update builds upon the GHG reduction strategies in the 2019 CAP. The updated CAP includes measures that aim to achieve reductions in GHG production by addressing energy efficiency in existing and new residential and non-residential buildings, increasing water efficiency, expanding transportation options and electrifying of fleets, reducing landfilled waste, promoting clean energy use and electrification of

equipment and aviation, and promoting best management practices in agricultural activities. This project's intent is to increase the reliability aspect of the load-serving grid and is not specifically intended to increase the renewable energy interconnections or reduce GHGs. Therefore, impacts regarding an applicable plan or policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs are considered less than significant.

IX. 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?

Less than Significant Impact. The project would not use or store any appreciable quantities of hazardous chemicals during construction. Diesel fuel, oil and hydraulic fluid would be present in association with heavy equipment used and staged on-site. However, the limited quantities of materials and the duration of construction would result in a less than significant impact regarding the creation of a hazard to the public through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

- b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Less than Significant Impact. Construction activities associated with the Project would involve routine storage, transport, and handling of hazardous materials. Vehicles and equipment containing petroleum products would be used on the site. Mineral oil, used to insulate transformers, would be transported to the site in the sealed transformer equipment. Any hazardous waste generated during construction (e.g., diesel fuel, oil, solvents) would be disposed of or recycled off-site in accordance with all applicable laws pertaining to the handling and disposal of hazardous waste. Potential for release of hazardous materials from construction activities into the environment is low in relation to the type of construction to be performed and potential for release of materials (e.g., accidental spill of diesel, oil, or hydraulic fluid). Given the protocols required for the transport, handling and storage of these materials, potential for upset and accidental release of hazardous materials is considered less than significant.

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

No Impact. The Xavier College Preparatory High School is located approximately 0.3 miles to the southeast. No impacts are identified, as no schools are located within one-quarter of a mile of the project.

- d) Be located on a site, which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section

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65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

No Impact. A search of the State Water Resources Control Board's GeoTracker website did not identify any hazardous materials sites at, or near, the project site (GeoTracker, 2025). Therefore, no impact is identified.

- 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 or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?

No Impact. The Bermuda Dunes Airport is located approximately 5.25 miles to the southeast of the project site. The Palms Springs International Airport is located approximately 8 miles to the west-northwest. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area and no impact would occur.

- f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

No Impact. The project site is not located along any public street that would impede traffic during the construction of the proposed electrical substation. Additionally, electrical service would be maintained during the extent of the project construction and integration. Thus, the proposed project would not impair the implementation of, or physically interfere with, any adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plans. No impact is considered less than significant.

- g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

Less than Significant Impact. According to the Riverside County General Plan, Safety Element (Riverside, 2024b), the project site is not located, the proposed project is not identified as a Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Additionally, Thousand Palms is not prone to any major wild land fires due to its desert environment, which does not support substantial amounts of brush. Therefore, the potential to expose people or structures to significant risk of loss, injury of death involving wildland fires is considered less than significant.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

- a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project includes the construction of a new three-

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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transformer electric substation and supporting distribution line upgrades/installation. Construction activities are not anticipated to violate waste discharge requirements or degrade water quality. Because more than one acre of soil would be disturbed as part of project construction, a SWPPP will be required. The SWPPP will identify construction and post-construction BMPs to ensure that no material is discharged or transported off-site during a rain event. The SWPPP would include measures such as silt fencing, fiber rolls, street sweeping, etc. to avoid impacts on water quality. Implementation of the SWPPP and compliance with BMPs will ensure that the project will not violate any water quality standards. A less than significant impact would occur.

- b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

No Impact. The proposed project includes the construction of an up to three-transformer electric substation and supporting distribution line upgrades/installation. The project itself would have minimal water demand during construction and would be limited to dust control. During operations, the project would not require a water supply. Therefore, no impact would occur.

- c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river through the addition of impervious surfaces in a manner which would:

- i) Result in a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site.

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project includes the construction of a new three-transformer electric substation and supporting distribution line upgrades/installation. There are no streams or rivers that intersect the site or the area proposed to be disturbed by the project. The project site does not include any water bodies and the project would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern on the site or area in a way that would alter the course of a stream or river. The potential for erosion would be limited to exposed soils during construction. Soil may be stockpiled during construction but would be temporary and Best Management Practices would be employed including watering of exposed soil and installation of fiber rolls or silt fencing to prevent soil transport. Because of the small size of the substation site and because IID would design the drainage to avoid any increase in the peak-flow rate, the potential increase in stormwater discharge would be negligible and any impact that would alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river through the addition of impervious surfaces is considered less than significant.

- ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project is not anticipated to substantially increase the amount of impervious surfaces as the proposed activity would consist of the construction of a new three-transformer electric substation as the only source of new impervious surfaces. Because more than one acre of soil would be disturbed as part of project construction, a SWPPP will be

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required. The SWPPP will identify construction and post-construction BMPs to ensure that surface runoff is controlled in a manner that prevents flooding on- or offsite. As a result, the project would have a less than significant impact regarding increasing the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manager which would result in flooding on- or off-site.

- iii) 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?

No Impact. The proposed project would not generate substantial amounts of runoff as described in item ii), above. Therefore, no impact would occur.

- iv) Impede or redirect flows?

No Impact. The proposed project would be required to prepare a SWPPP which will identify construction and post-construction BMPs to ensure that surface runoff is controlled in a manner that will not impede or redirect flows as described in item ii), above. Therefore, no impact would occur.

- d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

No Impact. The proposed project site is approximately 25 miles northwest of the northern tip of the Salton Sea which is the nearest large water body. Due to the distance, the Salton Sea does not pose a significant danger of inundation from tsunami or seiche related to the project site. Thus, no impact is identified for these issues.

- e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

No Impact. During construction and operations, the proposed project would not result in the use of groundwater or inhibit the recharge of groundwater as the project would not result in a substantial increase of impervious surfaces. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

- a) Physically divide an established community?

No Impact. The proposed project includes the construction of a new three transformer electrical substation on an undeveloped and vacant property and installation of supporting distribution lines located in the northern portion of Thousand Palms. The Ivey Ranch Country Club is located 550 feet to the south and the Xavier College Preparatory High School is located 0.3 miles to the southeast. The closest residential land uses to the north are 0.85 miles away and the Tri Palm estates and Country Club development is located approximately 1.2 miles to the west. Given the lack of development surrounding the project site the proposed project will not divide an established

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community. Additionally, the intent of the proposed project is provide stable and reliable electrical service to planned future growth in the surrounding area. Thus, no impact is identified regarding dividing an established community.

- b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

No Impact. The project site is within the Medium High Density Residential (MHDR) designation which is a land use designation that provides for the development of smaller lot, single family residences. Typical allowable uses in this category include detached, small-lot single family homes, patio homes, and townhouses. The project site has a zoning designation of Mobilehome Subdivision and Mobilehome Park (R-T). As a public utility development project designed to serve existing and planned residential developments in the area, the proposed substation is a necessary component for this region as it enables the designated land use to be serviced by efficient and reliable power.

XII. 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?

No Impact. The project site is in Mineral Resource Zone 1 (No significant mineral deposits) on Figure OS-6 Mineral Resource Zones of the Riverside County General Plan Multipurpose Open Space Element (Riverside, 2015, p. OS-41). Mineral Resource Zone 1 is defined by the California Department of Conservation as “Areas where available geologic information indicates that little likelihood exists for the presence of significant construction aggregate resources.” Thus, no impact is identified as implementation of the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource.

- 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?

No Impact. Refer to item a), above.

XIII. NOISE

Would the project result in:

- a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

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Less than Significant Impact. Construction of the proposed project would result in short-term, temporary noise with most of the noise occurring during the site preparation and preliminary stages of construction. Construction activities would create temporary localized increases in noise levels from operation of on-site equipment as well as from delivery trucks hauling materials. The major construction activities for the proposed project would consist of excavation, compaction, and equipment installation.

Short-term construction noise generated by equipment would occur with varying intensities and durations. Proposed equipment includes Boom Trucks, Bucket Trucks, Wire Pulling Trailers, Rope Pulling Trailers, Water Truck, Pickup Truck, Material Handling Trailers. Noise levels from construction operations decrease at a rate of approximately 6 dBA per doubling of distance from the source. Noise sensitive uses include residences, schools, churches, hospitals, nursing homes, parks, and recreation areas. The nearest sensitive receptors to the substation construction activities are homes located over 550 feet to the south in the Ivey Ranch Country Club residential community and potentially residential uses along the proposed distribution line segments.

Once operational, the proposed project equipment would operate 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Noise levels are not anticipated to increase to a level that would be perceptible to the residents at the Ivey Ranch Country Club to the south. Therefore, impacts resulting from generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project are anticipated to be less than significant.

- b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less than Significant Impact. Construction of the proposed project could generate groundborne vibration during the construction of the electrical substation, the required trenching for undergrounding of wires, and the replacement of electrical poles. Typical examples of equipment used are wheel excavator, skid steer loader, hydraulic hammer, and hand tools. The majority of groundborne vibrations would be felt in close proximity to the construction activities. The nearest sensitive receptors to the construction activities are homes located over 550 feet to the south in the Ivey Ranch Country Club. Although the construction could generate some ground borne vibration it would not be considered excessive and is temporary in nature. Therefore, this impact is considered less than significant

- c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or 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. The Bermuda Dunes Airport is located approximately 5.25 miles to the southeast of the project site. The Palms Springs International Airport is located approximately 8 miles to the west-northwest. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in exposure of people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels area. No impact would occur.

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XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

- a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and business) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

No Impact. The proposed project is the construction of a new three transformer electrical substation and installation of supporting distribution lines. The project is proposed to expand existing infrastructure in order to increase the electrical load capacity. This increase would be necessary to accommodate planned future growth as anticipated by the Riverside County General Plan in this service area. The project does not propose the development of new housing, nor does it propose construction or extension of new roads. Therefore, the Project is designed to increase capacity in response to regional growth projections. As a result, the Project would not indirectly induce unplanned population growth through the extension of infrastructure and no impact would occur.

- b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. The proposed project would be construction on undeveloped and vacant land. As a result, the proposed project would not displace substantial numbers of existing housing or people requiring construction of replacement housing elsewhere. No impact would occur regarding the need for replacement housing.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

- a) 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, to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

- 1) Fire protection?

Less than Significant Impact. The Riverside County Fire Department serves the proposed project from station 35 located at 31920 Robert Road. The proposed project includes the construction of a new three transformer electrical substation and supporting distribution lines and would not increase population and is not anticipated to result in a substantial increase in demand for fire protection as none of the project components are flammable. Therefore, impacts to fire protection are considered less than significant.

- 2) Police Protection?

No Impact. The Riverside County Sheriff's Department, specifically through their Palm Desert Station, provides law enforcement services for Thousand Palms. The proposed project includes the construction of a new three transformer electrical substation and installation of supporting distribution lines and would not increase population. Therefore, an increase in calls for police protection is not anticipated to increase substantially because of the proposed project. No impact is

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identified.

3) Schools?

No Impact. The proposed project is not anticipated to impact schools because it neither includes a residential component nor would it generate the need for new housing to accommodate the workforce population. Therefore, no impact is identified for this issue area.

4) Parks?

No Impact. The proposed project is not anticipated to impact parks because it neither includes a residential component nor would it generate the need for new housing to accommodate workforce population. Therefore, no impact is identified for this issue area.

5) Other Public Facilities?

No Impact. The project would enable IID to provide a more reliable service for its existing and planned future electrical system. The project does not include any component that would increase demand for other public facilities such as a new school, park, or other public facility. No impact would occur.

XVI. RECREATION

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

No Impact. The proposed project includes the construction of a new three transformer electrical substation and installation of supporting distribution lines. The project would not create demand for neighborhood or regional parks in Thousand Palms. Thus, no impact is identified for these issues.

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

No Impact. The proposed project includes the construction of a new three transformer electrical substation and installation of supporting distribution lines. The project does not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. Therefore, no impact is identified.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:

a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and

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pedestrian facilities.

No Impact. Project construction would require hauling of equipment and materials as well as worker commute trips to and from the project area along local arterial roadways. These trips would add to existing traffic volumes on the local roadways. Based on these minor temporary increases to traffic volumes (construction would last approximately six- to ten-month, with peak construction traffic only occurring for one-third of this period), temporary construction related trips are not considered to significantly affect roadway operations over existing conditions on any utilized roadways. There are no designated bikeways or pedestrian facilities in the project vicinity, and the project site is not served by public transportation. Furthermore, construction of the project would not interfere with any planned bicycle, pedestrian, or public transit facilities.

Once completed, the project is estimated to only require two vehicle trips a month for operational maintenance. Given the temporary increase in traffic and minimal long-term operational traffic, the proposed project would have no adverse impact on a program, plan or ordinance addressing the circulation system.

- b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Less than Significant Impact. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b), focuses on Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as the criteria for determining the significance of transportation impacts. The proposed project includes the construction of a new three transformer electrical substation and installation of supporting distribution lines. Construction would generate temporary construction-related traffic. This project would be categorized under Section 15064.3, subdivision (b), qualitative analysis. Subdivision (b)(3) acknowledges that lead agencies may not be able to quantitatively estimate VMT for every project type. In these cases, Subdivision (b)(3) encourages lead agencies to evaluate factors such as the availability of transit, proximity to other destinations, and other factors that may affect the amount of driving required by the project. Construction of the proposed project would result in a temporary increase in local traffic in association with construction-related workforce traffic and material deliveries.

Operation of the substation does not require it be permanently staffed and would be operated by IID remotely. IID maintenance employees would visit approximately twice per month to conduct routine checks and maintenance (no new employees would be needed to operate the facility). Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b). Impacts to VMT are considered less than significant.

- c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

No Impact. The proposed project is the construction of a new three transformer electrical substation and installation of supporting distribution lines. No changes to the traffic patterns or land uses would result from the proposed project. No impact would occur.

- d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

No Impact. The proposed project would result in temporary increases in temporary construction traffic along surface streets to access the project site but would be at levels that do not block traffic

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flow to surrounding properties. Any traffic would be minimal and temporary. Therefore, the project would not present any emergency access issues to surrounding residential and agricultural uses. No impact would occur regarding emergency access

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

- a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:
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Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed project includes the construction of a new three transformer electrical substation and installation of supporting distribution lines and is located on property that is vacant and undeveloped. Construction of the proposed project would include site grading and trenching to accommodate for undergrounding of equipment and wiring.

Tribal Consultation was performed as required under AB 52. Tribal letters are included in Appendix C. Four tribes responded as follows:

- H. Jill McCormick, M.A., Historic Preservation Office, Ft. Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe (no comment).
- Shasta C. Gaughen, PhD, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Pala Band of Mission Indians (The project is within the boundaries of the territory that the tribe considers its Traditional Use Area (TUA). However, they declined AB-52 consultation but did not waive their right to request consultation under other applicable laws in the future.)
- Brandon Walter, The Cocopah Indian Tribe (The project is not in the Tribe’s specific Area of Historic Interest. No further communication to the Cocopah Indian Tribe is requested.)
- Xitlaly Madrigal, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (The project is not located within the boundaries of the ACBCI Reservation. However, it is within the Tribe’s Traditional Use Area. Therefore, the tribe requests consultation, cultural resources inventory, copies of cultural resources documentation, and a copy of the records search).

Standard protocols will also be implemented during construction, including a Worker Environmental Awareness Program which trains construction workers to halt work if they identify any resources during excavation and other earthmoving activities. However, based on comments received from the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, this impact is considered potentially significant unless mitigation is incorporated.

Mitigation Measures

MM TRC-1 The following actions shall be taken to address concerns regarding the culturally sensitive area and Tribal Cultural Resource near the project site.

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- A Cultural Resource Technical Report shall be prepared by a qualified archaeologist, including a cultural resources inventory of the project area and a cultural records search with associated survey reports and site records from the appropriate information center.
- A copy of the records search with associated survey reports and site records from the information center shall be provided to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.
- Copies of any cultural resource documentation (report and site records) generated in connection with this project shall be provided to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.
- An approved Cultural Resource Monitor(s) shall be present during any ground disturbing activities (including archaeological testing and surveys). Should buried cultural deposits be encountered, the Monitor may request that destructive construction halt and the Monitor shall notify a Qualified Archaeologist (Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines) to investigate and, if necessary, prepare a mitigation plan for submission to the State Historic Preservation Officer. Formal government to government consultation shall occur as specified under California Assembly Bill No. 52 (AB-52).

Timing/Implementation: Prior to any development activities and during ground disturbing activities.

Enforcement/Monitoring: Imperial Irrigation District in coordination with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.

Following implementation of mitigation measure TRC-1, impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels.

- i.) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as define in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or
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No Impact. The proposed project does not contain any structures that could be eligible for registration in the California Register of Historical Resources or local registry. No impact would occur.

- ii.) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth is subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a
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California Native American Tribe.

Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated. Refer to item “a,” above.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

- a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project includes the construction of a new three transformer electrical substation and installation of supporting distribution lines. The environmental effects of these activities are analyzed in this document. No other new or expanded water or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities would be required. The proposed project would serve the needs for future development that has been planned for by the Riverside County General Plan and improve the reliability of IID’s existing electrical system. All impacts can be reduced to less than significant levels with mitigation incorporated.

- b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?

No Impact. The proposed project would require a minimal amount of water during construction to control dust and would not be at a level that would impact the available water supplies. Once operational, the project will not require any new water usage. Therefore, no impacts to water supply will result.

- c) Result in a 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. The proposed project would not produce or increase the amount of wastewater requiring treatment. Portable toilets would be used for workers during construction. No impact would occur regarding wastewater treatment.

- d) Generate solid waste more than state or local standards, or more than the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?

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No Impact. The proposed project would generate construction waste. This would be temporary and would be hauled and disposed of at a local landfill licensed to accept construction waste. Once construction is complete, the project is anticipated to produce minimal waste by the employees operating the facility. Therefore, no impact to solid waste would occur.

- e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

No Impact. Refer to item d) above.

XX. WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

- a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

No Impact. The proposed project is the construction of a new three transformer electrical substation and installation of supporting distribution lines. The project site is not located along any public street that would impede traffic during the construction of the proposed electrical substation. Additionally, electrical service would be maintained during the extent of the project construction and integration. Thus, the proposed project would not impair the implementation of, or physically interfere with, any adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plans. No impact is identified for this issue area.

- b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

No Impact. The potential for uncontrolled wildfire is unlikely given the topography and sparse desert vegetation. The project does not include habitable structures. Therefore, no impact would occur regarding exposing project occupants to pollutant concentrations from wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire.

- c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project includes the construction of a new three transformer electrical substation and installation of supporting distribution lines. The project structures are not intended for and would not be used for occupation. Therefore, the project would

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not expose project occupants to increased risks associated with wildfire.

The Project is located in an undeveloped parcel containing sparse desert vegetation with the nearest residence occurring 550 feet to the south. Distribution line upgrade and installation work would occur along existing roadways and easements. The project footprint is not located in an area of elevated wildfire risk and fuels normally associated with wildfire such as dry brush, chaparral, and forests are not present near the site. As a part of the Riverside Fire Code, the project would be required to install early detection warning systems and maintain defensible space around the substation. Additionally, the proposed substation would be constructed in accordance with applicable standards, which are designed to reduce wildland fire risk. Therefore, project construction and operation would result in a less than significant impact.

- d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, because of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

No Impact. The proposed project is located on flat land in Thousand Palms and is not located downstream or near any river, stream or body of water. No impact would occur that would result in exposing people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, because of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

*Note: Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21083.05, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 65088.4, Gov. Code; Sections 21080(c), 21080.1, 21080.3, 21083, 21083.05, 21083.3, 21093, 21094, 21095, and 21151, Public Resources Code; Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino,(1988) 202 Cal.App.3d 296; Leonoff v. Monterey Board of Supervisors, (1990) 222 Cal.App.3d 1337; Eureka Citizens for Responsible Govt. v. City of Eureka (2007) 147 Cal.App.4th 357; Protect the Historic Amador Waterways v. Amador Water Agency (2004) 116 Cal.App.4th at 1109; San Franciscans Upholding the Downtown Plan v. City and County of San Francisco (2002) 102 Cal.App.4th 656.
Revised 2009- CEQA, Revised 2011- ICPDS, Revised 2016 – ICPDS, Revised 2017 - ICPDS*

SECTION 3

III. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following are Mandatory Findings of Significance in accordance with Section 15065 of the CEQA Guidelines.

- 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?
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No Impact. The proposed project includes the construction of a new three transformer electrical substation and installation of supporting distribution lines. The area impacted by the construction is undeveloped and contains sparse desert vegetation that has undergone past clearing and disturbances as well as areas that adjacent to roadways and electrical line easements. As identified by the biological assessment, the site does provide some marginal suitable habitat for Coachella Valley flat-tailed horned lizard and Coachella Valley fringed-toed lizard. However, no evidence of occupation by these species was found during the grid survey, and the likelihood of presence is considered low given the marginal on-site habitat and the availability of high-quality suitable habitat within the adjacent Refuge. As a result, the project would have no impact with regard to degrading the quality of the environment, substantially reducing 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.

- 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.)
-

No Impact. Due to the short-term and temporary nature of construction and minimal change in emissions during operation, no significant individual or cumulative impacts to air quality or greenhouse gas emissions are anticipated. The proposed project would serve the needs for future growth in the area that has been planned for by the Riverside County General Plan. No other individual projects would result in a cumulative impact regarding any other resource areas discussed in this document. In conclusion, the proposed project would have no individually or cumulatively considerable impacts.

- c) Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects
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Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

No Impact. As described in items a and b, the construction impacts are short term and would not result in any long-term increases in air emissions which could be harmful to human beings. Once completed, the project would not increase air emissions or any other hazard to human beings. No other significant impacts have been identified in this analysis which could result in adverse impacts to human beings. Therefore, no impact is identified regarding the project having a substantial adverse effect on human beings directly or indirectly.

IV. PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS CONSULTED

This section identifies those people who prepared or contributed to the preparation of this document. This section is prepared in accordance with Section 15129 of the CEQA Guidelines.

A. IMPERIAL IRRIGATION DISTRICT

Jeremy J Brooks, Project Manager (Consultant)

Andres S Avila, Senior Project Manager

B. AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

United States Department of Fish and Wildlife

C. ENGINEER AND TECHNICAL STUDIES

Argonaut Ecological Consulting, Inc. – Biological Study

Peak & Associates, Inc. – Cultural Resources Assessment

(Written or oral comments received on the checklist prior to circulation)

V. REFERENCES (In Process)

- [California State Scenic Highways | Caltrans](https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways) <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways> Accessed July 18, 2025. Referenced in text as (Caltrans 2025).
- California Department of Conservation. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/ciff/> Accessed July 18, 2025. Referenced in text as (DOC 2025).
- Peak & Associates, Inc., 2025. Cultural Resource Assessment for the Proposed Cook Substation Imperial Irrigation District Project. April 14, 2025. Referenced In Text As (Peak, 2025).
- Riverside County Parcel Report (Riverside, 2025)
- Riverside County General Plan, Safety Element. (Riverside, 2024a)
- Riverside County General Plan, Safety Element. (Riverside, 2024b)
- Riverside County Eligible Scenic Highway (Riverside, 2017)
- State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker. Website: [GeoTracker \(ca.gov\)](https://www.geotracker.ca.gov/). Accessed July 18, 2025. Referenced in text as (GeoTracker 2025).
- CALFIRE, 2009. Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones In LRA, Western Riverside County. https://34c031f8-c9fd-4018-8c5a-4159cdff6b0d-cdn-endpoint.azureedge.net/-/media/osfm-website/what-we-do/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/fire-hazard-severity-zones/fire-hazard-severity-zones-map/upload-5/fhszl_map60.pdf

APPENDIX A
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT
IMPERIAL IRRIGATION DISTRICT
COOK SUBSTATION PROJECT
THOUSAND PALMS, CALIFORNIA

APPENDIX B
CULTURAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT
FOR THE PROPOSED COOK SUBSTATION
IMPERIAL IRRIGATION DISTRICT PROJECT
RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

APPENDIX C
TRIBAL CONSULTATION
RESPONSE LETTERS