

CS LINE UPGRADE PROJECT

Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration

September 2026



Prepared by



Prepared for

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: 92 kV CS Line Upgrade Project, Biological Resources Report.

Appendix B: Cultural Resources Desktop Assessment for the 92 kV "CS" Transmission Line Project, Indio and La Quinta, Riverside County, California.

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 CS Line Upgrade 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 (MND) 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.

SECTION 4

- VI. MITIGATION MONITORING & REPORTING PROGRAM (MMRP)**

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 affects 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 the 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:** CS Line Upgrade
- 2. Lead Agency:** Imperial Irrigation District (IID)
- 3. Contact person and phone number:** Jaime Asbury, General Manager; (760) 482-3379
- 4. Address:** 333 E. Barioni Blvd., Imperial, CA
- 5. E-mail:** iidenvironmental@iid.com
- 6. Project Location:** The CS Line Upgrade Project is located in the Coachella Valley within Riverside County, specifically traversing the City of La Quinta and City of Indio. The southern point of origin is from the Avenue 58 Substation, located in the City of La Quinta. From this substation the project alignment heads north along Mountain View (0.75 mi.) to Airport Boulevard before turning east for approximately 0.5 miles to then head north along Monroe Street for approximately 2.0 miles. From Monroe Street it turns west once it reaches Avenue 52 and travels for approximately 1.0 mile to Madison Street and then shifts north for approximately 1.0 mile until it hits Avenue 50. At Avenue 50 the project area traverses to the east for approximately 0.25 miles until it reaches Hjorth Street and takes a turn to the north for approximately 1.0 mile. Once the project hits Avenue 48, it goes east again for approximately 0.25 miles and terminates at the Avenue 48 Substation, located at 81550 Avenue 48, in the City of Indio.

At the intersection of Avenue 50 and Madison Street, approximately 720 linear feet of the transmission line alignment will be realigned from north to south. This realignment accommodates the City of Indio's capital improvement project (City Project ST 2004), which widens Avenue 50 from 60 feet to 100 feet (expanding roadway capacity to two travel lanes in each direction) between Madison Street and Botella Place. Replacement structures along this 720-foot segment will be placed in coordination with the City of Indio's improved roadway cross-section and within the reconfigured public right-of-way/utility easements. The alignment of the project area is depicted in Figure 1. The entire 6.5-mile utility alignment is located within existing public rights-of-way or established utility easements held by the IID.

- 7. Project sponsor's name and address:** Imperial Irrigation District (IID).
- 8. General Plan Designation:** The alignment of the approximately 6.5-mile long CS Line Upgrade project traverses existing IID right-of-way land across the City of La Quinta and the City of Indio. Within the City of La Quinta, the project crosses or is adjacent to areas with the following land use designations:
 - OS-N - Open Space Recreation
 - LDR - Low Density Residential

In the City of Indio, the project area lies within areas with the following land use designations:

- Festival District
- Public and Institutional
- Suburban Neighborhood High

-
- Parks and Recreation
 - Connected Neighborhood Low

9. Zoning: The alignment of the approximately 6.5-mile long CS Line Upgrade project traverses existing IID right-of-way land across the City of La Quinta and the City of Indio. Within the City of La Quinta, the project crosses or is adjacent to areas with the following zoning designations:

- RVL - Very Low Density Residential
- RL - Low Density Residential
- GC – Golf Course
- PR - Park and Recreation
- FP - Floodplain

In the City of Indio, the project area lies within areas with the following land use designations.

- Desert Estates-1 (DE-1)
- Desert Estates Transition-3 (DET-3)
- Public and Institutional (PI)
- Specific Plan/Project Master Plan (SP/PMP)
- Parks and Open Space (OS)
- Mobile Home (MH)
- Suburban Neighborhood-8 (SN-8)

10. Description of Project:

Background and Objectives: The existing 92-kilovolt (kV) "CS" transmission line serves as a critical component of the regional electrical grid. The purpose of the proposed Project is to increase the regional power system's capacity, reliability, and electrical infrastructure resilience.

By replacing older conductors and utility poles, the Project will increase the normal/emergency thermal rating of the line from 132/145 Megavolt-Amperes (MVA) to 250/300 MVA. This upgrade allows the infrastructure to meet growing regional energy demands and maintain grid stability during peak usage or emergency outages.

Project Characteristics: The proposed Project involves the comprehensive structural and electrical upgrade of approximately 6.5 miles of an existing overhead 92kV transmission line. The physical components are broken down into two distinct segments along the alignment:

- **Double-Circuit Segment (Approx. 4.3 Miles):** Upgrading the section currently configured with double circuits ("CS" and "CD" lines) which also carries lower-voltage local distribution lines attached below the main transmission wires ("underbuilt"). Only the "CS" circuit will be physically upgraded.
- **Single-Circuit Segment (Approx. 2.2 Miles):** Upgrading the section currently configured with a single "CS" line, which also includes underbuilt local distribution lines and an overhead static safety wire.

Specific infrastructure modifications include:

- **Pole Replacement:** Comprehensive redesign and replacement of all existing wood support structures. The existing wood poles will be replaced with a combination of new, sturdier wood and steel poles, depending on final engineering clearances. The plan-and-profile drawings identify approximately 164 wood-pole replacements or reconstructions with ten engineered steel-pole locations, including nine new engineered steel poles and one relocated engineered steel pole. New poles will use non-reflective, weathered steel or dull-finish wood poles to prevent sun glare and minimize visual contrast.
- **Conductor Wire Upgrades:** Removal of the existing aluminum wiring (795 kcmil AAC) and installation of a single, highly efficient 900 kcmil "Canary" steel-supported aluminum conductor (ACSS/TW/HS285) capable of safely operating at higher temperatures.
- **Fiber Optic Telecommunications:** Installation of a new 48-fiber Optical Ground Wire (OPGW) in the static safety position at the very top of the poles to improve utility SCADA communication and grid monitoring between the two substations.
- **Substation Modifications:** Internal equipment upgrades will occur entirely within the existing physical footprints of the Avenue 58 and Avenue 48 substations. Modifications will be limited to updating the primary and secondary electrical protective relay equipment (replacing older systems with modern SEL-411L, SEL-311L, and SEL-751 systems) and evaluating/sizing internal jumper connections. No expansion of substation walls or fences is proposed.
- **At the intersection of Avenue 50 and Madison Street,** approximately 720 linear feet of the transmission line alignment will be realigned from north to south. This realignment accommodates the City of Indio's capital improvement project (City Project ST 2004), which widens Avenue 50 from 60 feet to 100 feet (expanding roadway capacity to two travel lanes in each direction) between Madison Street and Botella Place. Replacement structures along this 720-foot segment will be placed in coordination with the City of Indio's improved roadway cross-section and within the reconfigured public right-of-way/utility easements.

Construction Methodology: Project construction will be performed by IID or its designated contractors. Construction activities will generally follow standard utility practices, including site access setup, pole hole auguring, pole erection, wire stringing/pulling, and site restoration.

To safely complete the structural and wiring upgrades, a long-term electrical outage will be required. This will temporarily take both the 92kV transmission circuits ("CS" and "CD") and the attached local distribution lines out of service. IID will coordinate these outages to minimize community disruption.

The precise timing, duration, daily construction hours, and equipment fleet details will be finalized during final design.

11. Surrounding land uses and setting: The entire 6.5-mile utility alignment is located within existing public rights-of-way or established utility easements held by the Imperial Irrigation District (IID). The span of the project area includes both the City of La Quinta and the City of Indio. Within the City of La Quinta, the project crosses or is adjacent to areas with the following land use designations:

- OS-N - Open Space Recreation
- LDR - Low Density Residential

In the City of Indio, the project area lies within areas with the following land use designations:

- Festival District
- Public and Institutional
- Suburban Neighborhood High
- Parks and Recreation
- Connected Neighborhood Low

12. Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.): Cities of La Quinta and Indio will act as Responsible Agencies under CEQA and will also process any right of way permitting required for the project.

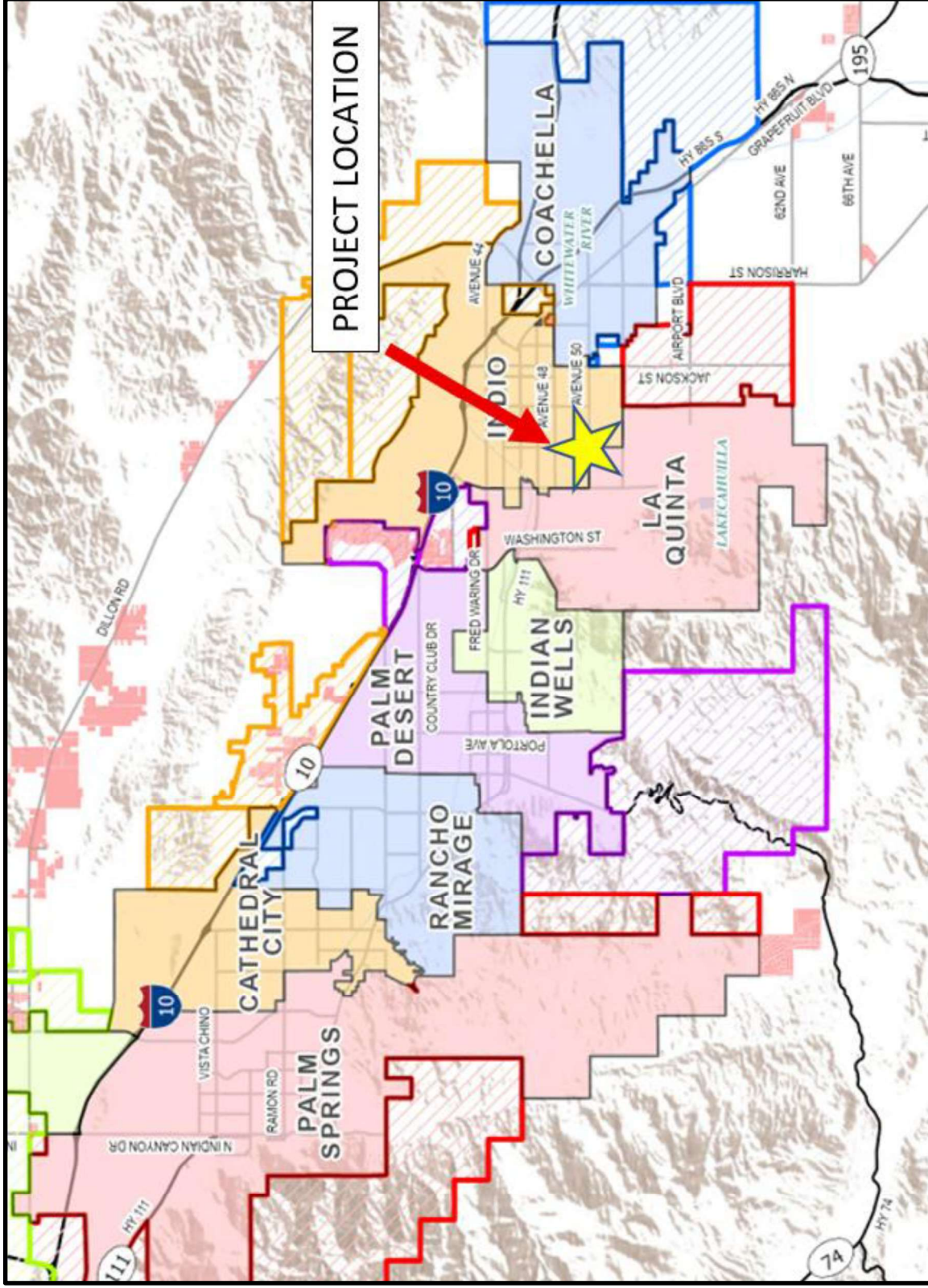
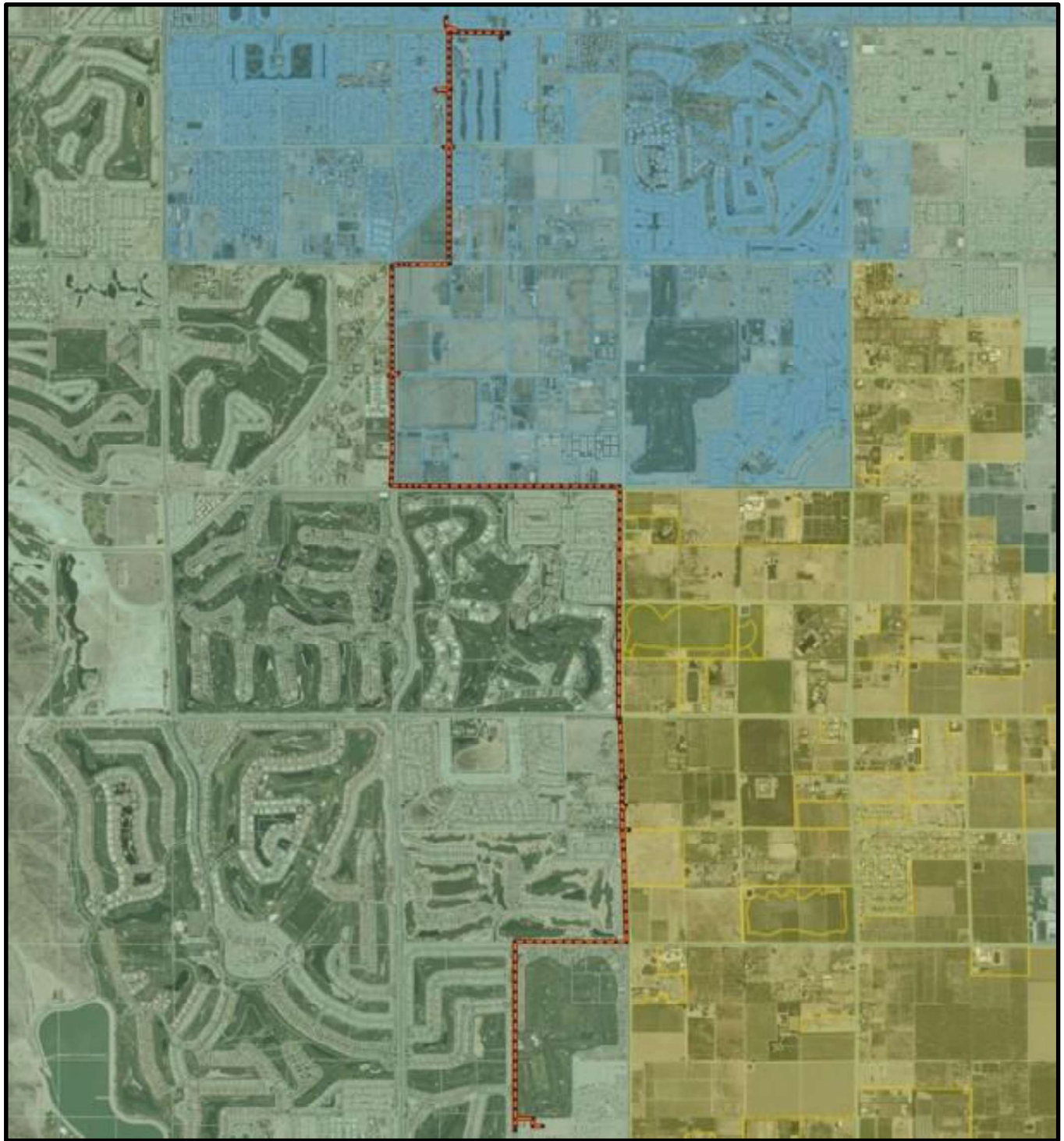
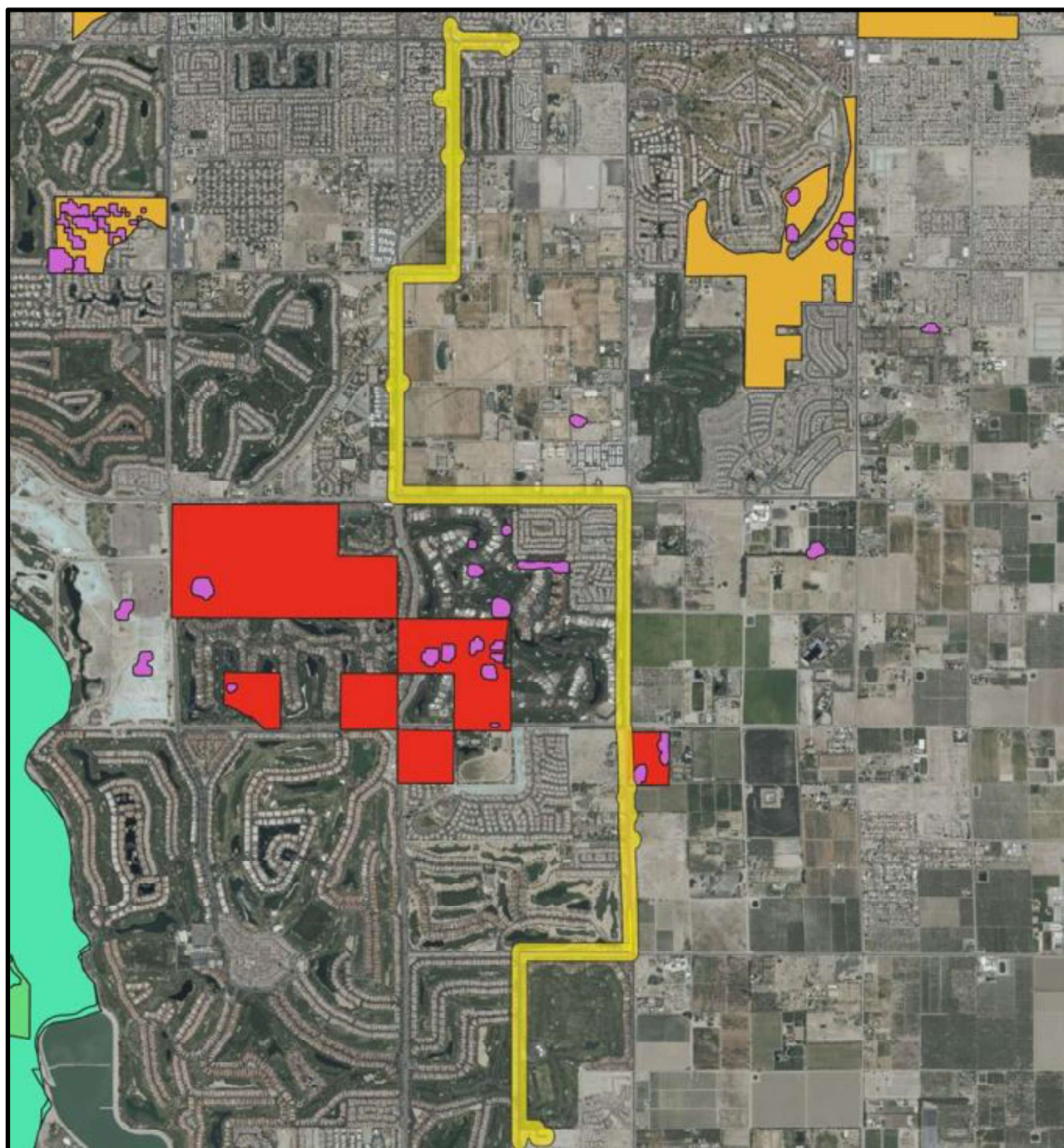


Figure 1
Regional Location Map



- PROJECT LOCATION
- CITY OF INDIO
- CITY OF LA QUINTA
- RIVERSIDE COUNTY

Figure 2
Jurisdictional and Regional Alignment



CVMSHCP NATURAL COMMUNITIES

- CAVFM
- DDWW
- DSALTS
- MH
- SCBS
- SCWRF
- SSDSF

Figure 3
CVMSHCP Natural Communities and Species of Concern

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 June 01, 2026.

- 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
- Iipay 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:

- Bernadette Ann Brierty, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Morongo Band of Mission Indians (The project is within the boundaries of the territory that the tribe considers its Traditional Use Area (TUA). Therefore, the tribe requests further project mapping, geotechnical report, and the results of a records search).
- Jocel Sanchez, 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).

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.



Photo 1: Aerial view of Avenue 58 Substation looking toward the southeast.

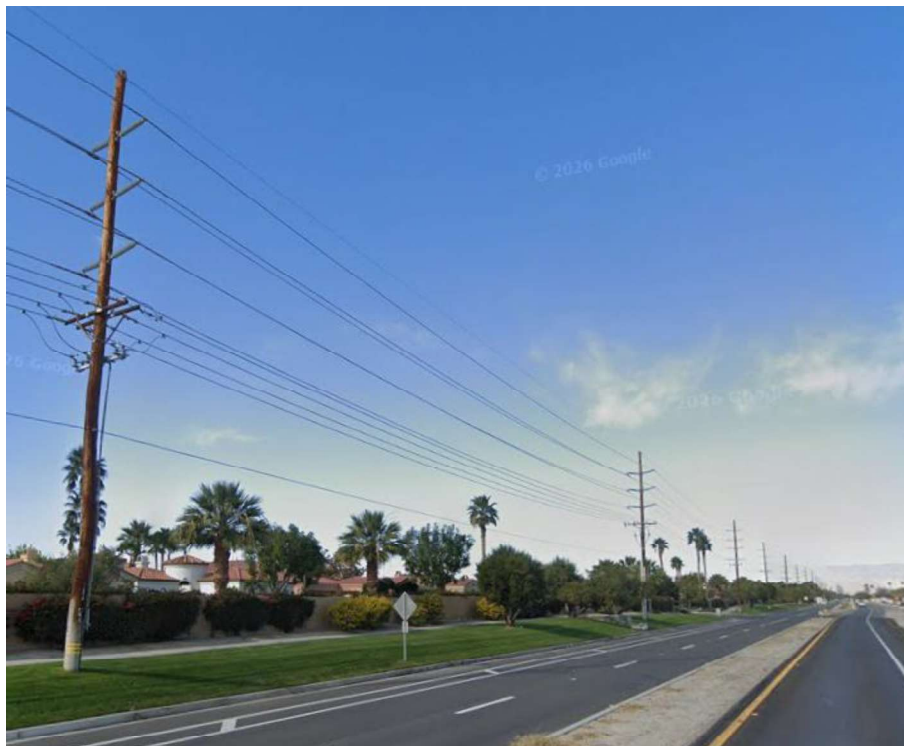


Photo 2: View of example line section for replacement of 92kV double circuit (Monroe Street).



Photo 3: View of example line section for replacement of 92kV single circuit (Hjorth Street).



Photo 4: View of the northwestern boundary of the 48th Avenue Substation.

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.

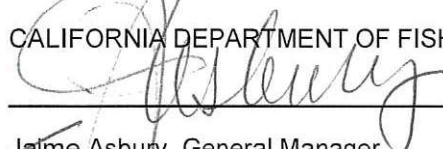
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|--|---|---|
| ☐ Aesthetics | ☐ Agriculture/Forestry Resources | ☐ Air Quality |
| ☒ Biological Resources | ☒ Cultural Resources | ☐ Energy |
| ☒ Geology/Soils | ☐ Greenhouse Gas | ☒ Hazards and Hazardous Materials |
| ☐ Hydrology/Water Quality | ☐ 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


Jaime Asbury, General Manager

10-13-2024
Date

PROJECT SUMMARY

A. Project Location: The CS Line Upgrade Project is located in the Coachella Valley within Riverside County, specifically traversing the City of La Quinta and City of Indio. The southern point of origin is from the Avenue 58 Substation, located in the City of La Quinta. From this substation the project alignment heads north along Mountain View (0.75 mi.) to Airport Boulevard before turning east for approximately 0.5 miles to then head north along Monroe Street for approximately 2.0 miles. From Monroe Street it turns west once it reaches Avenue 52 and travels for approximately 1.0 mile to Madison Street and then shifts north for approximately 1.0 mile until it hits Avenue 50. At Avenue 50 the project area traverses to the east for approximately 0.25 miles until it reaches Hjorth Street and takes a turn to the north for approximately 1.0 mile. Once the project hits Avenue 48, it goes east again for approximately 0.25 miles and terminates at the Avenue 48 Substation, located at 81550 Avenue 48, in the City of Indio. The alignment of the project area is depicted in Figure 2. The entire 6.5-mile utility alignment is located within existing public rights-of-way or established utility easements held by the IID.

B. Project Summary:

Background and Objectives: The existing 92-kilovolt (kV) "CS" transmission line serves as a critical component of the regional electrical grid. The purpose of the proposed Project is to increase the regional power system's capacity, reliability, and electrical infrastructure resilience.

By replacing older conductors and utility poles, the Project will increase the normal/emergency thermal rating of the line from 132/145 Megavolt-Amperes (MVA) to 250/300 MVA. This upgrade allows the infrastructure to meet growing regional energy demands and maintain grid stability during peak usage or emergency outages.

Project Characteristics: The proposed Project involves the comprehensive structural and electrical upgrade of approximately 6.5 miles of an existing overhead 92kV transmission line. The physical components are broken down into two distinct segments along the alignment:

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Specific infrastructure modifications include:

- Pole Replacement: Comprehensive redesign and replacement of all existing wood support structures. The existing wood poles will be replaced with a combination of new, sturdier wood and steel poles, depending on final engineering clearances. The plan-and-profile drawings identify approximately 164 wood-pole replacements or reconstructions with ten engineered steel-pole locations, including nine new engineered steel poles and one relocated engineered steel pole. New poles will use non-reflective, weathered steel or dull-finish wood poles to prevent sun glare and minimize visual contrast.
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Construction Methodology: Project construction will be performed by IID or its designated contractors. Construction activities will generally follow standard utility practices, including site access setup, pole hole auguring, pole erection, wire stringing/pulling, and site restoration.

To safely complete the structural and wiring upgrades, a long-term electrical outage will be required. This will temporarily take both the 92kV transmission circuits ("CS" and "CD") and the attached local distribution lines out of service. IID will coordinate these outages to minimize community disruption.

The precise timing, duration, daily construction hours, and equipment fleet details will be finalized during final design.

- C. Environmental Setting:** The proposed Project area spans a total of 6.5 miles along an existing IID easement within developed areas in the cities of Indio and La Quinta. The lines to be upgraded and poles to be replaced are mostly along roadways with some sections traversing ornamental and landscaped areas of land.
- D. Analysis:** The proposed Project is the replacement of existing electrical lines, associated equipment, and the replacement of existing power poles with larger poles capable of supporting the upgraded equipment. 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 upgraded equipment.
- E. General Plan Consistency:** As previously described, the Project area crosses a variety of land uses and zoning designations but is entirely within existing IID easements. The Project is considered consistent with the General Plan because it is a public utility use designed to serve areas designated for residential uses by the City of Indio and La Quinta.

F. 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).
- 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.

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. Scenic vistas are typically expansive views from elevated areas that may or may not be designated scenic overlooks or areas providing a static vista view of a landscape. No designated scenic vistas have been identified within or near the Project area, however, panoramic views of the Santa Rosa Mountains to the south and west, and the Indio Hills to the north and east are present in this region. These natural backdrops are highly valued community features visible from public roadways, residential neighborhoods, and active recreation areas throughout the City of La Quinta, the City of Indio, and surrounding unincorporated Riverside County. The proposed Project involves upgrading approximately 6.5 miles of an existing utility corridor and includes 164 wood-pole replacements or reconstructions and ten engineered steel-pole locations, including nine new engineered steel poles and one relocated engineered steel pole. Given the majority of poles include replacements, the proposed project will not substantially alter the baseline visual character of the alignment, which already includes poles, overhead wires, and substations.

According to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) State Scenic Highway Program, there are no officially designated State Scenic Highways in the immediate vicinity of the Project alignment. The nearest eligible State Scenic Highway is a portion of State Route 111 (SR-111), located north of the Project's northern terminus at Avenue 48. (Caltrans, 2026). Therefore, the Project would have a less than significant impact on scenic resources within a state scenic highway.

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

No 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 recognized scenic resources such as trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings. 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? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed Project is located within the incorporated municipal boundaries of the City of La Quinta and the City of Indio and are completely surrounded by suburban development. Because the 6.5-mile utility alignment is situated entirely within an urbanized area.

The northern portion of the Project alignment terminates near Avenue 48, immediately adjacent to

the southern perimeter of the Desert Shores Motorcoach Resort Planned Unit Development (PUD). This exclusive residential community features highly structured aesthetic rules, common area lakes, and valued views of the surrounding mountain ranges from outdoor patio villas. Because the Project replaces existing utility poles within an already established utility easement, it will not conflict with the underlying visual expectations of the PUD.

Along the Avenue 50 corridor between Madison Street and Hjorth Street, approximately 720 feet of the alignment will be shifted from the north side to the south side of Avenue 50 to accommodate the City of Indio's ST 2004 roadway widening improvements. This shift relocates the planned replacement poles directly across the street into the widened roadway right-of-way and adjacent disturbed agricultural roadside margin. Because this segment already features an established utility corridor and public roadway infrastructure, moving the poles to the south side does not introduce visually incompatible elements or obstruct scenic views of the surrounding mountain backdrops. The relocated poles will utilize the same non-reflective, weathered steel or dull-finish wood materials as the rest of the alignment to minimize glare and blend with the surrounding area, resulting in a less than significant impact on visual character.

The La Quinta General Plan Livable Community Element (Policies LCM-1.1 through LCM-1.7) and Land Use Element establish strict protections for designated scenic corridors and vistas of the Santa Rosa Mountains. They require public infrastructure to minimize visual clutter and preserve prominent mountain ridgelines as well as utilize colors, materials, and architectural finishes that blend seamlessly into the natural desert palette (e.g., earth tones, non-reflective surfaces). As described in the project description, new poles will use non-reflective, weathered steel or dull-finish wood poles to prevent sun glare and minimize visual contrast.

The Indio General Plan Land Use and Environmental Health Elements address the preservation of community aesthetics alongside public utility corridors by prioritizing the consolidation of utility corridors and encouraging utilities to utilize existing linear rights-of-way and co-located infrastructure. The proposed Project would be in compliance because it replaces existing poles in place and would be contained entirely within the IID utility easements.

Therefore, the proposed Project would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality and would have a less than significant impact on the visual character of the 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. 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. Additionally, nighttime lighting is not necessary for the replacement of the power poles. 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 involves upgrading approximately 6.5 miles of an existing overhead 92kV transmission line. This requires the replacement of existing wood poles with a redesigned configuration of sturdier wood or engineered steel poles. Because the Project represents a modification of an existing utility corridor operating within established public rights-of-way and active IID utility easements, the physical footprint of the new structures will remain concentrated within the existing transmission line corridors. Therefore, no Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance would be converted as a result of the implementation of the proposed Project and no impact would result.

- b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

No Impact. The proposed project is located on land that is not zoned for 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.

- 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))? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

No Impact. Based on the City of Indio and City of La Quinta General Plans, the Project site is not within an area of forest land or zoned for timberland production. No impact would occur.

- d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

No Impact. There are no existing forest lands on-site or within the Cities of Indio and La Quinta. 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.

- 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?
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

No Impact. As discussed in items “a” above, the proposed Project would not result in the conversion of farmland to a non-agricultural use. Additionally, the upgrading of power lines and replacement of power poles would not involve other changes in the existing environment that could result in the conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur.

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?
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

Less than Significant Impact. The project site is within the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The proposed project includes the installation of conductor, pole, fiber-optic, and internal existing-substation upgrades. 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. 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 upgrades to the substations would not change the existing ongoing activities and would 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. For the purposes of CEQA, "sensitive receptors" are defined as land uses where sensitive individuals are located or where activities could be significantly disrupted by localized air pollutants. These typically include residences, schools, daycare centers, hospitals, and senior care facilities.

The proposed Project involves upgrading approximately 6.5 miles of an existing overhead 92kV transmission line between the Avenue 58 Substation and Avenue 48 where the alignment goes through urbanized areas that directly border multiple residential sensitive receptors. These include the Ventana Specific Plan residential development (located south of Avenue 48 between Jefferson and Madison Streets), the Desert Shores Motorcoach Resort situated along Avenue 48, and various master-planned communities within the cities of La Quinta and Indio.

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.

Once completed, the operation of the upgraded power lines will not generate any direct, stationary source air pollutant emissions. Routine maintenance activities (such as periodic line inspections by IID utility trucks) will occur infrequently, replicating the pre-project operational baseline. 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. In regard to long-term operations, the proposed project would not change the routine inspection and maintenance of the existing transmission lines and would not result in any sources of substantial odors. Therefore, impacts associated with odors would be 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 the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐
- a) **Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated.** The biological evaluations for the Project defined a 350-foot-wide Biological Study Area (BSA) encompassing approximately 293 acres. Within this corridor, direct construction disturbances will be limited to approximately 41 acres of temporary work areas (pole work zones, pull/tensioning sites, and equipment staging) and less than 0.1 acre of total permanent footprint from new or enlarged pole foundations.

The BSA extends through a predominantly modified valley-floor landscape. Urban development, residential communities, golf courses, maintained landscaping, agricultural fields, orchards, pasture, public roads, utility corridors, and disturbed vacant parcels comprise most of the corridor.

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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Localized native or semi-natural habitat occurs in unpaved sandy areas, Atriplex scrub, mesquite vegetation, canal and drain margins, and other undeveloped pockets.

Existing transmission and distribution facilities, roadways, grading, cultivation, landscaping, and routine maintenance have fragmented habitat throughout much of the BSA. These conditions reduce habitat value for species requiring large, contiguous natural areas but do not eliminate potential use by burrowing owl, nesting birds, bats, sand-associated species, or wildlife associated with canals, ponds, agricultural margins, and mesquite.

Vegetation Communities

The BSA is predominantly developed, agricultural, landscaped, or otherwise disturbed. The mapped Prosopis alliance is identified as a sensitive natural community and may provide nesting, cover, foraging, and movement functions. Native Atriplex scrub, riverine, and lacustrine features also warrant focused avoidance review where they coincide with construction areas.

Impact Analysis: Most temporary disturbance would occur on developed, agricultural, landscaped, roadside, or previously disturbed surfaces. These land-cover types are common in the Project area and are not sensitive natural communities. Temporary disturbance would not result in substantial regional habitat loss.

Localized Atriplex scrub, mesquite, riverine, or lacustrine features could be affected if work areas extend beyond disturbed surfaces. BIO-4 requires avoidance and demarcation of sensitive natural communities and aquatic features. BIO-5 confines construction to approved disturbance limits and requires restoration of temporary work areas. Impacts are considered less than significant with the proposed mitigation incorporated.

Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan and Local Policies

The Project is within the planning area of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP). The CVMSHCP establishes a regional conservation framework for covered species and natural communities and includes requirements applicable to public infrastructure, operation and maintenance activities, conservation areas, and activities occurring within or adjacent to mapped biological resources.

As shown on Figure 3, the Project alignment is predominantly located outside mapped CVMSHCP natural-community features. A limited area of mapped Desert Saltbush Scrub occurs adjacent to a short portion of the Project alignment, generally along the Hjorth Street segment between Avenue 50 and Avenue 48. The mapped Desert Saltbush Scrub is adjacent to approximately 0.2 to 0.3 mile (approximately 1,000 to 1,500 feet) of the alignment. This represents only a small portion of the approximately one-mile Hjorth Street segment and of the overall Project alignment. The mapped community is primarily adjacent to, rather than continuously within, the existing transmission-line corridor.

The Project setting in this location is substantially modified by existing infrastructure. The transmission line follows Hjorth Street within an established utility corridor along a paved public roadway containing existing transmission and distribution poles, road shoulders, utility

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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improvements, and adjacent developed, landscaped, agricultural, or previously disturbed areas. Project activities would consist primarily of replacement or reconstruction of existing utility facilities within this established corridor. Accordingly, the presence of Desert Saltbush Scrub within the broader biological study area does not indicate that the entirety of the mapped community would be disturbed by Project construction. The Biological Resources Report similarly concludes that most Project disturbance would occur on developed, agricultural, landscaped, roadside, or previously disturbed surfaces and that native desert vegetation occurs only in localized areas.

Impact Analysis: Construction adjacent to the mapped Desert Saltbush Scrub could result in localized effects if pole work areas, equipment, access, staging, or other temporary disturbance were allowed to extend from the existing disturbed roadway/utility corridor into native vegetation. However, the Project incorporates measures specifically intended to avoid or minimize this potential interaction. BIO-1 requires preconstruction biological clearance of applicable work areas. BIO-3 requires focused biological review where work would occur in native desert scrub or other suitable habitat and requires work areas to be shifted to developed or previously disturbed surfaces where feasible. BIO-5 requires approved work areas, access routes, staging areas, and biological exclusion zones to be identified and confines vehicles and equipment to those approved areas.

In addition, BIO-6 requires IID to confirm and implement the CVMSHCP provisions applicable to public infrastructure, covered species, natural communities, conservation areas, and adjacency to conserved lands before construction. Where activities occur within or adjacent to mapped CVMSHCP resources, the construction package must incorporate applicable measures addressing lighting, drainage, toxic substances, noise, invasive species, barriers, grading, and species protection. Any required coordination with the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission, fees, joint project review, take coverage, restoration, or compensation must be completed before the affected activity begins.

Because the mapped Desert Saltbush Scrub occurs only along a limited portion of the alignment and is adjacent to an existing disturbed roadway and utility corridor, avoidance of native vegetation is expected to be practicable through final work-area siting and use of existing disturbed surfaces. If final construction limits would extend into mapped or field-verified native desert scrub, the qualified biologist and IID would establish appropriate avoidance limits and implement any additional CVMSHCP requirements applicable to the affected activity before disturbance. With implementation of BIO-1, BIO-3, BIO-5, and BIO-6, the Project would not substantially convert or fragment Desert Saltbush Scrub or conflict with applicable CVMSHCP requirements. Impacts would remain less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Plant Species

The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) and California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) searches identified 19 special-status plant taxa for evaluation. Refer to the Biological Resources Report provided as Appendix A for a full plant species list. Most are associated with desert dunes, loose sand, Sonoran desert scrub, chenopod scrub, desert washes, rocky desert habitat, or marsh and riparian environments. Coachella Valley milk-vetch, chaparral sand-verbena, gravel milk-vetch, slender cottonheads, and other sand-associated plants have low to moderate potential in

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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localized unpaved areas where Myoma fine sand, loose aeolian sand, or remnant dune habitat remains. Potential is low or absent in paved, intensively landscaped, cultivated, compacted, or continuously maintained portions of the corridor.

Plants associated with Atriplex scrub, Sonoran desert scrub, or washes generally have low potential because native vegetation is localized and fragmented. Aquatic plant potential is limited to canals, ponds, drains, or other permanently or seasonally wet features.

Impact Analysis: Ground disturbance in unpaved Myoma fine sand, native desert scrub, or other suitable habitat could crush or remove special-status plants or alter localized habitat. The affected area would be small relative to the BSA and regional habitat, and most construction would occur on modified surfaces. BIO-1 requires a preconstruction biological resource survey, and BIO-3 requires focused review of sandy and native desert habitat. Work areas would be shifted to disturbed surfaces where feasible. Listed plants or occupied rare-plant habitats would not be disturbed without applicable authorization and mitigation. Impacts are considered less than significant with the proposed mitigation incorporated.

Wildlife Species

The CNDDDB, RareFind, and IPaC species database reviews identified 26 special-status wildlife taxa for evaluation. Refer to the Biological Resources Report provided as Appendix A for a full wildlife species list. No designated or proposed federal critical habitat overlaps the Project area.

Burrowing Owl

Burrowing owl is a state candidate for listing as endangered and a CDFW Species of Special Concern. The species uses open areas with low vegetation and available burrows, including agricultural fields, pasture, desert flats, vacant parcels, canal banks, road margins, and disturbed sites. These conditions occur intermittently along the Project corridor. This species has a moderate potential to occur.

Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard and Other Sand-Dependent Wildlife

The Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard is federally threatened, and state endangered and depends on loose, windblown sand. Flat-tailed horned lizard, Palm Springs pocket mouse, Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel, and several special-status invertebrates may also use sandy desert habitat. Myoma fine sand is mapped in the BSA, but habitat suitability is reduced where the surface is paved, cultivated, compacted, landscaped, or isolated. These species have a low to moderate potential to occur in localized unpaved sandy habitat.

Desert Pupfish and Aquatic Wildlife

Desert pupfish is federally and state endangered and may occur in suitable drains, springs, ponds, or other aquatic features within its occupied range. Potential is limited to aquatic features and does not extend to dry upland pole locations. The potential for these species to occur is low and feature specific.

Bats

Western mastiff bat, western yellow bat, and pocketed free-tailed bat are documented regionally.

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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Palms, mature trees, buildings, culverts, pole cavities, and other structures may provide roosting opportunities, while canals, ponds, golf courses, and irrigated landscapes may provide foraging habitat. The potential for bats to occur in the Project area is low to moderate.

Nesting Birds

Trees, palms, shrubs, agricultural vegetation, ornamental landscaping, existing utility poles, electrical equipment, buildings, and other structures within and adjacent to the BSA provide potential nesting substrates. Agricultural land, golf courses, ponds, canals, and open disturbed areas also provide foraging habitat for raptors and other birds. Active nests may occur even where habitat is developed or routinely disturbed.

Impact Analysis: Construction could affect burrowing owl, sand-dependent reptiles and mammals, bats, aquatic wildlife, or other special-status species through direct mortality, burrow collapse, temporary habitat disturbance, vehicle strike, noise, vibration, or entrapment. The greatest potential occurs at unpaved sandy areas, open agricultural margins, canal banks, vacant parcels, mature palms or trees, and aquatic features. BIO-1, BIO-3, BIO-5, and BIO-6 require preconstruction clearance, species-specific avoidance, work-area controls, worker training, and stop-work procedures. These measures would prevent unauthorized take and reduce temporary effects to a less-than-significant level.

Direct entry into or alteration of a canal, drain, pond, streambed, or associated riparian vegetation could affect aquatic habitat, water quality, or regulatory jurisdiction. The Project is designed to use existing upland access and pole locations and does not require routine work within aquatic features. BIO-4 prohibits encroachment into mapped or field-verified aquatic resources unless the feature has been evaluated and applicable permits or agreements have been obtained. Erosion, spill, and sediment controls would be implemented near aquatic features.

Pole replacement, removal of existing hardware, conductor work, vegetation trimming, and equipment operation could disturb active nests or result in nest abandonment if work occurs during the breeding season. The existing corridor and surrounding developed and agricultural land contain numerous potential nesting substrates. BIO-2 requires a nesting-bird survey no more than three days before work during the nesting season, species-appropriate buffers, monitoring where necessary, and release of buffers only after the nest is no longer active.

With implementation of the mitigation measures provided below, impacts to wildlife species are considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

BIO-1: Preconstruction Biological Resource Survey. No more than three days before initial ground disturbance, vegetation removal, pole removal, or equipment setup, a qualified biologist shall survey the applicable work areas and accessible surrounding habitat for special-status species, active burrows, sensitive plants, aquatic features, and other biological constraints.

A qualified biologist shall possess a degree in biology, ecology, wildlife management, botany, or a related field; at least three years of relevant field experience; demonstrable experience with the species and habitats being evaluated; and any permits or authorizations required for handling or survey activities.

Sensitive resources shall be flagged or otherwise demarcated for avoidance. If a listed species or occupied protected resource is found within an impact area, work shall stop in the vicinity until IID and the biologist establish an authorized avoidance, monitoring, relocation, consultation, or permitting approach. Wildlife shall not be handled or relocated without appropriate authorization.

Timing/Implementation: No more than three days before initial disturbance at each work area.

Enforcement/Monitoring: Qualified Biologist and Imperial Irrigation District.

BIO-2: Preconstruction Nesting Bird Survey. If construction occurs during the bird breeding season, generally February 1 through August 31 for raptors and March 15 through August 31 for most other migratory birds, a qualified avian biologist shall conduct a nesting-bird survey no more than three days before initial disturbance.

The survey shall include the work area and adjacent habitat with potential to be affected by construction activity or noise. If an active nest is identified, the biologist shall establish an avoidance buffer. Unless a different distance is supported by site-specific conditions and documented by the biologist, the initial buffer shall be 500 feet for raptors and 250 feet for other protected birds.

Buffers may be adjusted based on species, nest location, nesting stage, existing disturbance, topography, visual screening, and the type and intensity of construction. Work shall not occur within the buffer until the nest is no longer active or monitoring demonstrates that construction can proceed without causing nest failure or abandonment.

Timing/Implementation: During the applicable breeding season and no more than three days before initial disturbance.

Enforcement/Monitoring: Qualified Avian Biologist and Imperial Irrigation District.

BIO-3: Burrowing Owl and Sandy-Habitat Species Protection. Before disturbance in open agricultural land, pasture, vacant or ruderal land, canal banks, road shoulders, Myoma fine sand, native desert scrub, or other suitable habitat, a qualified biologist shall conduct focused clearance for burrowing owl and other special-status species appropriate to the habitat.

Burrowing-owl take-avoidance surveys shall follow current CDFW guidance and shall include an initial survey within 14 days before disturbance and a final survey

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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within 24 hours before disturbance where suitable habitat is present.

Unpaved loose-sand habitat shall be evaluated for Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard, flat-tailed horned lizard, Coachella Valley milk-vetch, Palm Springs pocket mouse, Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel, and other sand-associated species identified in Appendices B and C. Work areas shall be shifted to developed or previously disturbed surfaces where feasible.

If an occupied burrow, listed species, or occupied special-status plant population is identified, work shall not proceed within the affected area until species-specific avoidance, agency coordination, take authorization, and mitigation requirements are satisfied.

Timing/Implementation: Before disturbance in suitable open, burrow, sandy, or native desert habitat.

Enforcement/Monitoring: Qualified Biologist and Imperial Irrigation District

BIO-4: Sensitive Natural Community and Aquatic Resource Avoidance. Project disturbance shall avoid the mapped Prosopis sensitive natural community, field-verified riparian vegetation, riverine and lacustrine habitat, canals, drains, ponds, streambeds, and other aquatic features to the maximum extent feasible.

Where a sensitive community or aquatic feature occurs near a work area, a qualified biologist shall verify its limits and establish a clearly marked exclusion area. A minimum 25-foot setback shall be maintained where feasible, unless a larger distance is required by an agency, permit, or site-specific condition.

If avoidance is infeasible, IID shall complete the applicable aquatic-resource delineation, CDFW notification, Clean Water Act authorization, water-quality certification, CVMSHCP review, restoration, and compensatory mitigation before disturbance.

Timing/Implementation: During final work-area layout and throughout construction.

Enforcement/Monitoring: Qualified Biologist, Imperial Irrigation District, and applicable permitting agencies.

BIO-5: Limits of Disturbance and Worker Environmental Awareness. Approved pole work areas, pull and tension sites, access routes, staging areas, and exclusion zones shall be shown on construction plans or environmental exhibits and clearly marked in the field where necessary.

Before beginning work, construction personnel shall receive environmental awareness training addressing special-status species, nesting birds, burrowing owl, sensitive natural communities, aquatic features, vehicle speed, trash control, wildlife encounters, spill prevention, and stop-work procedures.

Vehicles and equipment shall remain within approved roads and work areas. Temporary disturbance shall be restored or stabilized after construction. Open excavations shall be covered or provided with wildlife escape ramps when unattended, and work areas shall be inspected for trapped wildlife before daily activities begin.

Timing/Implementation: Before and during construction.

Enforcement/Monitoring: Construction Contractor, Qualified Biologist, and Imperial Irrigation District.

BIO-6: CVMSHCP Consistency. IID shall implement the CVMSHCP requirements applicable to public infrastructure, operation and maintenance, covered species, natural communities, conservation areas, and adjacency to conserved lands.

Where Project activities occur within or adjacent to mapped CVMSHCP resources, the construction package shall incorporate applicable measures addressing lighting, drainage, toxics, noise, invasive species, barriers, grading, and species protection. Required coordination, fees, joint project review, take coverage, restoration, or compensation shall be completed before the affected activity begins.

Timing/Implementation: Before construction and throughout Project implementation.

Enforcement/Monitoring: Imperial Irrigation District in coordination with the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission and applicable jurisdictions.

- 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?
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated. As discussed under item “a)” above, with the implementation of mitigation measures BIO-1 through Bio-6, any potential impacts to riparian or other sensitive natural communities will be reduced to a level considered less than significant.

- 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?
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
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No Impact. The BSA includes mapped riverine and lacustrine land cover and contains or approaches canals, drains, ponds, and stormwater features. Pole work and pull sites are expected

	Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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to remain on existing upland utility, roadside, agricultural, or developed surfaces. Aquatic features would be avoided and, therefore, no impact would occur.

- 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?
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed Project would upgrade an existing overhead utility corridor and would not create a new continuous ground-level barrier, remove a regional habitat linkage, or permanently impede wildlife movement. Construction noise, equipment operation, and increased human activity could cause localized, temporary wildlife avoidance. However, movement opportunities along canals, golf courses, agricultural margins, open parcels, and other undeveloped areas would remain available during construction. Following construction, the corridor would continue to function as an existing linear utility use, and no new permanent features that would substantially interfere with wildlife movement or the use of native wildlife nursery sites are proposed. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinance protecting biological resource, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?
- | | | | |
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No Impact. See discussion under item "a)" above.

- 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?
- | | | | |
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| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
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No Impact. See discussion under item "a)" above.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

The following discussion is based on the Cultural Resource Desktop Assessment for the 92 kV "CS" Transmission Line Project, Indio and La Quinta, Riverside County, California prepared by ASM Affiliates (Appendix B). ASM performed a records search at the South Coastal Information Center (SCIC) at San Diego State University (SDSU), San Diego, part of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), for the proposed project location and a 0.5-mile radius surrounding the proposed project alignment. The search included all records and documents on file with the SCIC, as well as the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) Historic Properties Directory. A total of 41 previous reports were identified as a result of the records search within 0.5 mile of the project area. The results of the record search can be found in Appendix B. The majority of the project alignment has been subject to prior study, either directly or as part of larger-scale studies in the area.

Would the Project:

- a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?

No Impact. For the purposes of CEQA, a historical resource is a resource listed in or determined eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. When a project impacts a site, it needs to be determined whether the site is a historical resource.

The proposed Project involves structural and electrical modifications across a 6.5-mile utility alignment. The proposed work 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 impact to historical resources.

- b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5? ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐

Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated. The project alignment itself and immediately adjacent parcels comprise developed agricultural, residential, and recreational areas, as well as road and utility corridors. While much of the project area has been subject to archaeological survey in the past, only five resources have been identified in near proximity (within 75 m) to the alignment. Four were single isolated artifacts that have since been removed by subsequent development. Isolated artifacts are considered de facto not eligible for the NRHP or CRHR. The fifth previously documented resource is the NRHP-eligible Coachella Canal, which should not be directly impacted by the proposed project.

The topography of the project area is relatively homogeneous, leading to a similar level of potential archaeological sensitivity along the whole of the alignment. It is unclear based on records search maps whether the entirety of the alignment has been specifically subject to previous archaeological survey. As such, while there appears to be a low likelihood that previously undocumented resources would remain within the alignment or in its immediate proximity due to the developed nature of the overall project area, implementation of mitigation measures TRC-1 through TRC-8, provided in the Tribal Cultural Resources section, would reduce potentially significant impacts to a level considered to be less than significant.

- 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. 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 TRC-7, provided in the Tribal Cultural Resources section.

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 be 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 nor 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. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

No Impact. The proposed Project would not construct a new substation or electrical-generation facility. It would upgrade an existing 92 kV transmission line and update protective relay equipment and internal jumper connections within the existing Avenue 48 and Avenue 58 substations. The Project would not alter IID's electricity-generation sources, renewable-energy portfolio, or obligations under applicable renewable-energy and energy-efficiency requirements. Construction vehicles and equipment would be required to comply with applicable state fuel-efficiency and

	Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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emissions standards. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency, and no impact would occur.

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: ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

- 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. ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Less than Significant Impact. According to Department of Conservation, Geologic Survey, 2024. EQ Zapp: California Earthquake Hazards Zone Application (California 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 three 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? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

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 three 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 associated equipment. Additionally, all IID equipment and transmission 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 Map My County Public GIS Viewer (Riverside, 2026), the approximately

6.5-mile Project area crosses areas depicted as having low, moderate, and high liquefaction areas. Because the proposed Project is the upgrading of electrical lines and replacement of power poles, it does not house people and 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, 2026) 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 excavation, grading, trenching, backfilling, and other construction work required for the replacement of power poles along the 6.5-mile Project area. 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 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 proposed Project traverses multiple soil types across its 6.5-

mile alignment. Table GEO-1 summarizes the soil types within the Project area.

Table GEO-1
Project Area Soil Types

SYMBOL	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
GbA	Gilman fine sandy loam, 0-2% slopes	Low shrink-swell potential. Coarse-loamy, well-drained alluvial soil.
GeA	Gilman silt loam, 0-2% slopes	Low shrink-swell potential. Similar to GbA but with higher silt content.
MaB	Myoma fine sand, 0-5% slopes	Low shrink-swell potential (typically around 1.5% linear extensibility).
Is	Indio very fine sandy loam	Low shrink-swell potential. Coarse-silty, well-drained soil.
It	Indio very fine sandy loam, wet	Low shrink-swell potential. Identical profile to "Is" but possesses a shallow or perched water table.
Ip	Indio fine sandy loam	Low shrink-swell potential. Coarse-silty alluvial soil with a slightly higher sand fraction than the very fine variants.
Ir	Indio fine sandy loam, wet	Low shrink-swell potential. Identical to "Ip" but subject to prolonged saturation or a high local water table.

Source: United States Department of Agriculture. 2025

As indicated in Table GEO-1, the soil complexes underlying the 6.5-mile Project alignment consist predominantly of sandy loams, silt loams, and fine sands associated with the Gilman, Myoma, and Indio series. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey for the Coachella Valley Area, these soils are predominantly coarse-textured and lack highly expansive clay minerals, resulting in a low shrink-swell potential throughout the entire corridor. Additionally, the proposed Project does not include any habitable structures and the foundations for the equipment that will be installed will be designed and engineered taking into consideration the soils present. Therefore, direct, and indirect risk to life and property are considered 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 Project would not use or require septic tanks or alternative wastewater-disposal systems. Therefore, 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 replacement of power poles to support the upgrading of power lines and ancillary equipment. The entire Project area lies within IID easements that are in developed areas that have disturbed during the installation of the original power poles. Thus, no unique aboveground geologic features are present. The Riverside County Map My County search tool (Riverside, 2026) identified land within and surrounding the Project area as having a high potential for paleontological sensitivity. Therefore, excavations for the pole replacements/installations and other associated ground disturbances have the potential to disturb previously unknown paleontological resources which could lead to potentially significant impacts unless mitigation is incorporated. Therefore, impacts to paleontological resources are considered potentially significant unless mitigation is incorporated.

Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would ensure that the potential impacts on paleontological resources do not rise to the level of significance pursuant to CEQA. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would reduce the impact on paleontological resources to a level less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

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 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 upgrading power lines, ancillary equipment, and upgrades to existing substation equipment. 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. 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? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed Project involves the comprehensive structural and electrical upgrade of approximately 6.5 miles of an overhead 92kV transmission line corridor extending from the Avenue 58 Substation north to Avenue 48 Substation. Multiple schools are located along the Project alignment including the Benjamin Franklin Elementary School (located at 82-400 Avenue 52, Indio) and Harry S. Truman Elementary School (located at 78-750 Avenue 50, La Quinta).

Hazardous materials to be used during the construction and operation of the proposed Project would consist of low toxicity materials including gasoline, diesel fuel, oil, and lubricants associated with construction equipment and vehicles. These low toxicity materials would be used throughout the proposed Project area. The low toxicity of the materials associated with the proposed Project and proper handling, storage, and disposal of all hazardous materials in accordance with the project specific SWPPP, Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC), and applicable regulations would reduce impacts to the future school to a less than significant level.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. Database searches were conducted for potential hazardous sites located on, or near the Project site using the California Department of Toxic Substances Control's (DTSC) EnviroStor Database and State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) Geotracker database (SWRCB, 2026). These databases are an online search and Geographic Information System (GIS) tool for identifying sites that have known contamination or sites for which there may be reasons to further investigate.

The Geotracker database records indicate that one closed LUST cleanup site is located along the 6.5-mile Project area. It was located in the City of La Quinta and was closed in 1998. The Envirostor Database showed that there are no historical or active contaminated sites along the Project area alignment. Because the Project's construction footprints are located entirely within verified, established utility corridors and public rights-of-way that are free of active Cortese List designations, ground-disturbing activities will not inadvertently slice into or expose workers to known plumes of contaminated soil or groundwater. Therefore, the Project will not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment as a result of a listed hazardous materials site. Impacts would be less than significant.

	Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated. The nearest public-use aviation facility to the proposed Project is the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport (owned and operated by Riverside County), located at 56-850 Higgins Road in Thermal, California. The northern terminus of the utility corridor at Avenue 48 is located approximately 4 miles northwest of the airport property; however, as the alignment extends south toward its southern terminus at the Avenue 58 Substation, the corridor approaches within 1 to 1.5 miles of the airport's primary north/south runway footprint. Consequently, the southern portion of the 6.5-mile Project alignment is physically located within the boundaries of the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP), administered by the Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC). Because the Project involves replacing existing utility infrastructure with a redesigned configuration of wood and steel structures, the primary potential safety hazard is the introduction of a new vertical obstruction into restricted airspace or imaginary approach surfaces (under FAA Federal Aviation Regulations Part 77). While the Project represents an upgrade of a pre-existing overhead transmission line corridor, the new engineered steel or wood poles will feature a moderate increase in structural height to comply with CPUC General Order 95 vertical clearance mandates. If pole heights are increased within the designated Airport Compatibility Zones without proper review, they could pierce flight safety buffers or conflict with local ALUC height limits, posing a potentially significant hazard to regional navigation. Implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-1 would require the final engineered alignment plans be submitted to the Riverside County ALUC for formal compatibility review, and file FAA Form 7460-1 (Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration) for any replacement poles meeting FAA filing thresholds. Mitigation Measure HAZ-1 would address safety for both aircraft operations and personnel working along the line and reduce this impact to a level considered to be less than significant. Additionally, because the proposed Project involves utility infrastructure and does not introduce new residential, commercial, or habitable buildings, it will not place any new permanent residents or dense working populations within an active flight hazard zone. With the incorporation of state and federal aeronautical mapping reviews, long-term safety hazard impacts will be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. Short-term construction workers moving progressively along the 6.5-mile path will be exposed to temporary aviation noise, but this exposure will be transient, outdoor, and will not exceed occupational safety thresholds. Once construction is complete, the operational transmission line, underbuilt distribution circuits, and overhead fiber optic lines will generate zero noise. Therefore, the Project will not result in long-term excessive airport noise exposure for people residing or working in the area, and no noise-related impacts would occur.				
<u>Mitigation Measures</u>				

HAZ-1: Aeronautical Obstruction and ALUC Consistency Review. Prior to the issuance of municipal encroachment permits or the start of ground-disturbing activities for segments south of Avenue 50, the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) and its contractors shall ensure compliance with the following aviation safety standards:

- 1) ALUC Submittal: Final engineered pole locations and maximum structural heights for the southern portion of the alignment shall be submitted to the Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) to confirm consistency with the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport ALUCP height and safety criteria.
- 2) FAA Form 7460-1 Filing: In accordance with Code of Federal Regulations Title 14, Part 77, IID shall file Form 7460-1 (Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration) with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for any replacement structures that exceed a 200:1 imaginary gliding surface from the nearest runway.

Timing/Implementation: Prior to the initiation of any on-site grading.
Enforcement/Monitoring: Imperial Irrigation District

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

Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated. A project can impair or physically interfere with an emergency response or evacuation plan by introducing physical barriers along critical evacuation routes, causing severe traffic congestion that impedes emergency vehicles, or closing roadways without establishing adequate detours.

The proposed Project involves structural and electrical modifications across a 6.5-mile utility alignment running between the Avenue 58 Substation and Avenue 48 Substation. Because the utility corridor follows major regional arterial roadways (such as Jefferson Street) that straddle the municipal boundaries of the City of La Quinta and the City of Indio, the construction footprint has the potential to physically interfere with emergency responses along streets designated as critical evacuation and emergency response corridors in the Riverside County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan, as well as the Safety Elements of the local cities' General Plans.

The Project requires the replacement of power poles, followed by the pulling and stringing of the transmission conductor and optical ground wires. Due to the proximity of the existing poles to the roadway, heavy construction equipment (such as cranes, bucket trucks, and line pullers) will occasionally need to operate from the paved shoulders or travel lanes of these arterial streets.

If construction activities or lane closures are executed without formal, regional coordination, they have the potential to inadvertently delay emergency response vehicles (such as Riverside County Fire Department or Cal Fire rigs) navigating the corridor or conflict with an active emergency

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evacuation order.

Mitigation Measure HAZ-2 requires the preparation of a comprehensive Traffic Control Plan (TCP) that explicitly mandates the preservation of emergency vehicle access at all times and requires formal notification to local emergency service providers before any lane closures or line-stringing blocks begin. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-2, short-term construction impacts will be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

HAZ-2: Construction Traffic Control and Emergency Service Coordination. Before ground-disturbing activities, pole removal, conductor stringing, or other work that could affect a public roadway, the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) and its construction contractor shall prepare and implement a Traffic Control Plan (TCP) in coordination with the City of La Quinta, the City of Indio, Riverside County, and other affected roadway authorities, as applicable. The TCP shall include the following requirements:

Traffic-control measures. The TCP shall identify anticipated lane closures, temporary traffic stoppages, construction hours, detour routes, flagger locations, advance-warning signs, and other measures necessary to maintain safe traffic circulation. Lane closures and temporary traffic stoppages shall be limited to the shortest duration practicable.

Emergency access. Unobstructed access for fire, law-enforcement, ambulance, and other emergency-response vehicles shall be maintained through or around the construction area at all times. Construction vehicles, equipment, materials, and temporary traffic-control devices shall not block emergency-access routes, fire lanes, fire hydrants, or access to adjacent properties. Flaggers and construction personnel shall be prepared to suspend work and provide immediate passage to emergency vehicles. A complete roadway closure shall not occur unless an appropriate detour has been approved by the affected roadway authority and coordinated in advance with the applicable emergency-service providers. Temporary traffic stoppages required for conductor-stringing activities shall be coordinated and controlled so that the roadway can be reopened promptly for emergency vehicles.

Advance Notification. IID or its contractor shall provide written notice to affected fire departments, law-enforcement agencies, ambulance providers, public works departments, and other applicable emergency-service providers at least 72 hours before a planned lane closure, roadway closure, detour, or conductor-stringing operation that could

temporarily interrupt traffic. The notice shall identify the location, date, anticipated work hours, expected duration, proposed detour or access arrangements, and a 24-hour construction contact. Any material schedule change shall be communicated to the affected agencies as soon as practicable.

Timing/Implementation: The TCP shall be approved before construction activities that could affect a public roadway and shall be implemented throughout construction.

Enforcement/Monitoring: Imperial Irrigation District construction contractor, and the affected roadway authority.,

- 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. A project's vulnerability to wildfire is evaluated based on its proximity to State Responsibility Areas (SRAs) or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZs) as mapped by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). A review of the CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps for Riverside County (CalFire, 2026) indicates that the entire 6.5-mile physical alignment and its surrounding land uses are designated as Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) Unzoned or Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zones. The flat, valley-floor alignment is surrounded by master-planned suburban developments, golf courses, retail shopping centers, and active agricultural fields rather than volatile, unmaintained wildland chaparral or dense forest fuels.

The operation of heavy machinery, diesel-powered vehicles, and tools such as grinders or welding equipment creates a localized potential for sparks, which could theoretically ignite dry roadside vegetation or agricultural stubble. However, these construction activities are transient, moving progressively along the established, mostly paved or graded public rights-of-way and existing Imperial Irrigation District (IID) utility easements. Furthermore, construction will be executed in strict compliance with California Fire Code Chapter 35 and standard Cal/OSHA occupational safety mandates. IID's construction crews routinely operate under standard utility protocols that require on-site fire extinguishers and water trucks for dust control, which double as immediate fire suppression tools if an accidental ignition occurs. Because the corridor lacks wildland fuel connectivity and standard preventative measures are embedded in utility operations, construction-related wildfire risks would be 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 involves structural and electrical modifications across a 6.5-mile utility alignment. 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?

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No Impact. The proposed Project involves structural and electrical modifications across a 6.5-mile utility alignment. 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:

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

Less Than Significant Impact. Canals, drains, ponds, stormwater facilities, and mapped riverine or lacustrine features occur within or near portions of the Project corridor. However, pole-replacement areas, pulling and tensioning sites, access routes, and staging areas would generally be located within existing upland utility easements, public rights-of-way, roadways, and previously disturbed areas. The Project would not realign, fill, or otherwise substantially alter the course or capacity of an existing stream, canal, drain, pond, or other drainage feature.

The Project would add only a negligible amount of permanent impervious surface associated with new or enlarged pole foundations. Excavation, temporary soil stockpiles, and other ground-disturbing activities could temporarily increase erosion or sediment transport during construction. Because construction would disturb more than one acre, the Project would be required to prepare and implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and applicable erosion- and sediment-control best management practices. These measures would include, as appropriate, fiber rolls, silt fencing, stabilized construction entrances, street sweeping, protection of soil stockpiles, and stabilization or restoration of temporarily disturbed areas.

Because aquatic and drainage features would be avoided, permanent impervious surfaces would be minimal, and construction-related erosion and sediment would be controlled through required stormwater measures, the Project would not result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site.

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Impacts would be less than significant.

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| ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite; | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
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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 replacement of power poles and utility lines. 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 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 manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site.

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

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| iv) Impede or redirect flows? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
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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.

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| d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to Project inundation? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
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No Impact. The proposed Project site is approximately 14 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.

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

	Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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- a) Physically divide an established community? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

No Impact. The proposed Project involves the comprehensive structural and electrical upgrade of approximately 6.5 miles of an existing overhead 92kV transmission line. The utility corridor is situated along established municipal thoroughfares and parcel boundaries that interface with the City of La Quinta and the City of Indio. The surrounding built environment is highly urbanized, consisting of established commercial plazas, schools, and master-planned residential developments. The Project represents an incremental modernization of a pre-existing overhead grid network designed to improve regional energy capacity and reliability. Because it maintains the established baseline configuration and introduces no new physical barriers to local circulation, the Project will not physically divide an established community. **No impact** would occur.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed Project spans a 6.5-mile utility corridor that traverses or directly borders the incorporated municipal boundaries of the **City of La Quinta** and the **City of Indio**. The Project represents a consolidated upgrade to a pre-existing corridor, utilizes non-reflective materials to respect desert scenic guidelines, maintains existing municipal setbacks, and is legally permitted under state-level utility frameworks, it will not cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with an applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

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 proposed Project spans a 6.5-mile linear utility corridor along the urbanized alluvial plain separating the City of La Quinta and the City of Indio. According to California Geological Survey (CGS) mineral land classification mapping (California DOC, 2022) and the Safety and Land Use Elements of the local jurisdictions' General Plans, the southern Coachella Valley floor along the project alignment is primarily categorized as MRZ-3 (areas containing unproven or un-evaluated mineral deposits). The operation of the upgraded 92kV transmission line, underbuilt distribution circuits, and overhead fiber optic lines will occupy a narrow linear footprint that mirrors an active public utility corridor established decades ago. The Project does not propose any expansive surface structures, deep open-pit quarries, or changes to underlying land use entitlements that could restrict or block regional mineral extraction. Thus, no impact is identified with regard to mineral resources.

- 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 construction 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.

To prevent temporary spikes from creating an un-permissible public nuisance, the Project has been designed to strictly incorporate and adhere to the established noise ordinances and allowable construction hours of the local jurisdictions.

- City of La Quinta Municipal Code (Section 11.10.050): Explicitly exempts noise from construction activities provided they occur between the hours of 7:00 AM and 5:30 PM, Monday through Saturday, with no construction permitted on Sundays or federal holidays.
- City of Indio Municipal Code (Section 95C.07): Permits construction-related noise within the designated hours of 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday, and 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Saturdays, prohibiting work on Sundays.

Short-term construction noise generated by equipment would occur with varying intensities and durations. Proposed equipment includes pole hole augers, crane rigs, bucket trucks, material hauling vehicles, and wire-stringing pullers. The operation of this equipment will generate localized, intermittent mechanical noise that will temporarily elevate ambient sound levels along the immediate margins of the 6.5-mile alignment. Construction impacts will be transient and progressive as crews move sequentially from pole to pole along the 6.5-mile corridor. As a result, heavy machinery will not be continuously concentrated adjacent to any single residential fence line, school campus, or specific plan frontage for an extended duration. Standard project features will require the contractor to equip all internal combustion engines with factory-approved mufflers. Therefore, the Project will not generate a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels in excess of local standards, resulting in a less than significant impact.

Once operational, high-voltage electrical transmission, sub-transmission, and underbuilt distribution lines are not considered active noise-producing land uses, eliminating the potential for long-term operational noise and resulting in less than significant impacts.

- b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?
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| ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
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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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Less Than Significant Impact. Excessive vibration is evaluated based on two primary metrics: human annoyance (expressed in vibration decibels, or VdB) and architectural structural damage to buildings (measured in peak particle velocity, or PPV, in inches per second).

Short-term construction activities along the 6.5-mile corridor will require heavy equipment that interacts directly with the ground. The primary source of localized vibration will be the use of truck-mounted pole hole augers to excavate foundations for the new, 70-foot wood and engineered steel poles. Additional minor vibration will be generated by the physical movement of heavy utility fleets, including cranes, bucket trucks, concrete trucks, and material haulers.

The Project does not require high-impact pile driving or blasting, which are the primary drivers of structurally damaging construction vibration. According to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) engineering data, a standard soil auger rig produces a localized vibration level of approximately 0.089 inches per second PPV at a reference distance of 25 feet. At this level, the ground shaking is completely below the strict architectural damage threshold for standard residential structures (0.2 inches per second PPV) and well below the threshold for modern, engineered commercial buildings (0.5 inches per second PPV).

While sensitive receptors situated immediately adjacent to the alignment may temporarily perceive a faint hum or vibration during the augering of a nearby pole hole, the impact will be highly localized and brief. By adhering to local noise policies that restrict construction during daytime hours, the Project would not result in impacts related to sleep disruption or human annoyance.

Because vibration activities will be non-destructive, transient, and will move progressively along the 6.5-mile route without lingering near any single home for more than a few days, the generation of short-term groundborne vibration would be less than significant.

Because high-voltage electrical lines, local distribution underbuilt circuits, and substation electrical protective relays do not contain moving mechanical parts capable of pulsating or sending energy into the ground, the operational phase of the Project would not result in impacts related groundbourne vibration or noise.

- 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?

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No Impact. The nearest public aviation facility to the Project corridor is Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport. The southeastern portion of the 6.5-miles alignment extends to within 3.5 miles of the airport's western runway. Short-term construction workers executing pole hole augering, extracting old wooden structures, and stringing conductors for the upgraded 92kV system will be exposed to intermittent, temporary ambient noise from aircraft overflights. This includes single-engine aircraft, twin-engine turboprops, and corporate business jets operating out of the nearby airport. However, this exposure will be purely transient and outdoor. Construction crews will move progressively along the Project alignment, remaining in the immediate vicinity of the airport's

primary flight paths for only a brief duration.

Over the long term, the upgraded infrastructure will function as a static, unstaffed electrical transmission and distribution network. Therefore, the proposed Project would not result in exposure of people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels. No impact would occur.

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)? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Less Than Significant Impact. A project would have a significant impact on population and housing if it induces substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly by constructing new housing or commercial developments, or indirectly by extending infrastructure (such as roads, water mains, or power lines) into previously undeveloped areas where it would foster unplanned urban growth.

Because the Project replaces and modernizes existing utility infrastructure within established rights-of-way to serve planned baseline demand rather than opening up new undeveloped territories, it will not indirectly induce substantial unplanned population growth. Impacts would be less than significant.

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

No Impact. A project would result in a significant impact related to housing displacement if it requires the removal, demolition, or permanent condemnation of existing residential dwellings, thereby forcing the relocation of residents and necessitating the construction of replacement housing in other locations.

The physical scope of work consists of replacing existing wood utility poles with a redesigned configuration of wood and steel poles, installing a single 900 kcmil "Canary" conductor wire and overhead fiber optic lines, and upgrading internal protective relays at the Avenue 48 and Avenue 58 substations. Because the Project will not displace any existing housing units or residents, it will not necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. No impact would occur.

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

	Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
1) Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Less than Significant Impact. Impacts to public services are evaluated based on whether a project generates a permanent population growth or introduces unique hazards that would increase demand for fire protection services, thereby requiring the construction of new or physically altered fire stations—the construction of which could cause adverse physical environmental impacts. Fire protection and emergency medical response along the 6.5-mile utility corridor are provided by the Riverside County Fire Department (RCFD) in partnership with Cal Fire. Short-term construction activities and long-term operations of the existing alignment will not generate a permanent population or build new habitable structures that require long-term fire protection services. Therefore, less than significant impacts are anticipated related to fire protection.				
2) Police Protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
No Impact. Impacts to police services are evaluated based on whether a project introduces new residential populations or commercial land uses that generate increased ongoing demands for law enforcement, thereby requiring the construction of new or physically expanded police facilities—the construction of which could result in adverse physical environmental impacts. Law enforcement services along the 6.5-mile utility alignment are provided through municipal contract and regional county services from the City of Indio, City of La Quinta, and the County of Riverside. Short-term construction activities and long-term operations of the existing alignment will not generate a permanent population or build new habitable structures that require long-term police services. No impact is 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 either 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
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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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substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

No Impact. The proposed Project involves upgrading approximately 6.5 miles of an existing overhead 92kV transmission corridor and does not involve a residential component. Therefore, it will not create the increase the use of parks or the need for additional park space. 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 involves upgrading approximately 6.5 miles of an existing overhead 92kV transmission corridor and does not involve a residential component. 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 pedestrian facilities. ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Less than Significant 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. Furthermore, construction of the Project would not interfere with any planned bicycle, pedestrian, or public transit facilities.

To accommodate the City of Indio's Avenue 50 widening project (City Project ST 2004) between Madison Street and Botella Place, approximately 720 feet of the alignment will be shifted from the north side to the south side of Avenue 50. Realigning this segment coordinates directly with the City's planned expansion from 60 to 100 feet and places the replacement poles outside of newly constructed travel lanes, sidewalks, and roadside facilities. This realignment prevents long-term physical obstructions to the circulation network, ensuring the Project remains consistent with local mobility plans and circulation policies. Short-term installation activities along this segment will remain subject to standard traffic control protocols under MM HAZ-2 to safely manage localized traffic flow and maintain emergency access.

Once completed, periodic routine line maintenance and inspection visits by IID utility crews will mirror existing baseline operations and will not alter long-term vehicle volumes or roadway capacity.

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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Given the temporary increase in traffic and minimal long-term operational traffic, the proposed Project would have a less than significant 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 replacement of existing wood utility poles with a redesigned configuration of wood and steel poles, installing a single 900 kcmil "Canary" conductor wire and overhead fiber optic lines, and upgrading internal protective relays at the Avenue 48 and Avenue 58 substations. 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.

Once completed, periodic routine line maintenance and inspection visits by IID utility crews will mirror existing baseline operations and will not alter long-term vehicle volumes or roadway capacity. 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 involves upgrading approximately 6.5 miles of an existing overhead 92kV transmission corridor. At the Avenue 50 and Madison Street intersection, approximately 720 feet of the alignment will shift from the north side to the south side of Avenue 50 to accommodate the City of Indio's ST 2004 roadway widening project. The replacement poles along this segment will be installed within the widened right-of-way outside the expanded 100-foot roadway cross-section, ensuring full horizontal clearance from planned travel lanes, curbs, and corner sight-distance triangles. The realignment will not introduce sharp curves, blind corners, or any hazardous geometric roadway features. 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 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

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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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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| ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

- 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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| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
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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 California Native American Tribe.
- | | | | |
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| ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
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Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed project includes the replacement of power poles to support the upgrading of power lines and ancillary equipment. This construction work includes excavation, grading, trenching, backfilling, and other soil disturbance along the 6.5-mile Project area.

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

- Bernadette Ann Brierty, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Morongo Band of Mission Indians (The project is within the boundaries of the territory that the tribe considers its Traditional Use Area (TUA). Therefore, the tribe requests further project mapping, geotechnical report, and the results of a records search).
- Jocel Sanchez, 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

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inventory, copies of cultural resources documentation, and a copy of the records search).

Consultation with the Morongo Band of Mission Indians and the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians continues during the preparation and processing of this MND. Additionally, standard cultural protection protocols will 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 Morongo Band of Mission Indians and the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, this impact is considered potentially significant unless mitigation is incorporated.

Mitigation Measures

TRC-1 **Native American Treatment Agreement.** Prior to the issuance of grading permits, the applicant shall enter into a Tribal Monitoring Agreement with the Morongo Band of Mission Indians for the project. The Tribal Monitor(s) shall be on-site during all ground-disturbing activities (including, but not limited to, clearing, grubbing, tree and bush removal, grading, trenching, fence post placement and removal, construction excavation, excavation for all utility and irrigation lines, and landscaping phases of any kind). The Tribal Monitor(s) shall have the authority to temporarily divert, redirect, or halt the ground-disturbing activities to allow identification, evaluation, and potential recovery of cultural resources and/or tribal cultural resources.

Timing/Implementation: *Prior to any development activities.*

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

TRC-2 **Retention of Archaeologist.** Prior to any ground-disturbing activities (including, but not limited to, clearing, grubbing, tree and bush removal, grading, trenching, fence post replacement and removal, construction excavation, excavation for all utility and irrigation lines, and landscaping phases of any kind), and prior to the issuance of grading permits, the Applicant shall retain a qualified archaeologist who meets the U.S. Secretary of the Interior Standards (SOI). The archaeologist shall be present during all ground-disturbing activities to identify any known or suspected archaeological and/or cultural resources. The archaeologist will conduct a Cultural Resource Sensitivity Training, in conjunction with the Tribe[s] Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), and/or designated Tribal Representative. The training session will focus on the archaeological and tribal cultural resources that may be encountered during ground-disturbing activities as well as the procedures to be followed in such an event.

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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Timing/Implementation: Prior to any development activities and during ground disturbing activities.

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

TRC-3

Cultural Resource Management Plan. Prior to any ground-disturbing activities the project archaeologist shall develop a Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP) and/or Archaeological Monitoring and Treatment Plan (AMTP) to address the details, timing, and responsibilities of all archaeological and cultural resource activities that occur on the project site. This Plan shall be written in consultation with the Consulting Tribe[s] and at minimum, shall include the following: (1) the approved Mitigation Measures (MM)/Conditions of Approval (COA), (2) procedures for each MM/COA, (3) the contact information for all pertinent parties, (4) parties' responsibilities, and (5) an overview of the project schedule.

Timing/Implementation: Prior to any development activities.

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

TRC-4

Pre-Grade Meeting. The retained qualified archeologist and Consulting Tribe[s] representative shall attend the pre-grade meeting with the grading contractors to explain and coordinate the requirements of the monitoring plan.

Timing/Implementation: Prior to any ground disturbing activities.

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

TRC-5

On-site Monitoring. During all ground-disturbing activities the qualified archaeologist and the Tribal Monitor(s) shall be on-site full-time. The frequency of inspections shall depend on the rate of excavation, the materials excavated, and any discoveries of Tribal Cultural Resources as defined in California Public Resources Code Section 21074. Archaeological and Native American monitoring will be discontinued when the depth of grading and the soil conditions no longer retain the potential to contain cultural deposits. The qualified archaeologist, in consultation with the Tribal Monitor(s), shall be responsible for determining the duration and frequency of monitoring.

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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Timing/Implementation: During ground disturbing activities as determined by the qualified archaeologist.

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

TRC-6

Inadvertent Discovery of Cultural Resources. In the event that previously unidentified cultural resources are discovered /unearthed during construction, the qualified archaeologist and the Tribal Monitor(s) shall have the authority to temporarily divert and/or temporarily halt ground-disturbance activities in the area of discovery to allow for the evaluation of potentially significant cultural resources. Isolates and clearly non-significant deposits shall be minimally documented in the field and collected so the monitored ground-disturbing activity can proceed.

If a potentially significant cultural resource(s) is discovered, work shall stop within a 60-foot perimeter of the discovery and an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) physical demarcation/barrier constructed. All work shall be diverted away from the vicinity of the find(s), so that the qualified archaeologist and Tribal Monitor[s] can evaluate it/they. The archaeologist shall notify the Lead Agency and Consulting Tribe[s] of said discovery. The qualified archaeologist, in consultation with the Lead Agency, the Consulting Tribe[s], and the Tribal monitor, shall determine the significance of the discovered resource. A recommendation for the treatment and disposition of the Tribal Cultural Resource shall be made by the qualified archaeologist in consultation with the Tribe[s] and the Tribal monitor[s] and be submitted to the Lead Agency for review and approval.

Below are the possible treatments and dispositions of significant cultural resources in order of CEQA preference:

A. Full avoidance.

B. If avoidance is not feasible, Preservation in place.

If Preservation in place is not feasible, all items shall be reburied in an area away from any future impacts and reside in a permanent conservation easement or Deed Restriction.

C. If all other options are proven to be infeasible, data recovery through excavation and then curation in a Curation Facility that meets the Federal Curation Standards (36 CFR 79).

Unless otherwise agreed upon by all parties, all removed items from the Project shall be temporarily curated on-site in a secure and locked location (i.e., Conex box, a lockable office or drawer with restricted access to it, etc.). A periodic inventory must be maintained and provided to Consulting Tribe[s].

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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Timing/Implementation: During ground disturbing activities.

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

TRC-7

Inadvertent Discovery of Human Remains. The Morongo Band of Mission Indians requests the following specific conditions to be imposed in order to protect Native American human remains and/or cremations. No photographs are to be taken except by the coroner, with written approval by the Consulting Tribe[s].

A. Should human remains and/or cremations be encountered on the surface or during any and all ground-disturbing activities (i.e., clearing, grubbing, tree and bush removal, grading, trenching, fence post placement and removal, construction excavation, excavation for all water supply, electrical, and irrigation lines, and landscaping phases of any kind), work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery shall immediately stop within a 100-foot perimeter of the discovery. The area shall be protected by the establishment of an ESA with a marked boundary. Project personnel/observers will be restricted from entry into the ESA. The County Coroner is to be contacted within 24 hours of discovery. The County Coroner has 48 hours to make his/her determination pursuant to State and Safety Code §7050.5. and Public Resources Code (PRC) § 5097.98.

B. In the event that the human remains and/or cremations are identified as Native American, the Coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) within 24 hours of determination pursuant to subdivision (c) of HSC §7050.5.

C. The NAHC shall immediately notify the person or persons it believes to be the Most Likely Descendant (MLD). The MLD has 48 hours, upon being granted access to the Project site, to inspect the site of discovery and make his/her recommendation for final treatment and disposition, with appropriate dignity, of the remains and all associated grave goods pursuant to PRC §5097.98.

D. If the Morongo Band of Mission Indians has been named the MLD or Co-MLD, the Tribe may wish to reburial the human remains and/or cremation and sacred items in their place of discovery with no further disturbance where they will reside in perpetuity. The place(s) of reburial will not be disclosed by any party and is exempt from the California Public Records Act (California Government Code § 6254[r]). Reburial location of human remains and/or cremations will be determined by the Tribe's MLD, the landowner, and the City Planning Department.

Timing/Implementation: During ground disturbing activities.

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

TRC-8

The final report[s] created as a part of the project (CRMP/AMTP, isolate records, site records, survey reports, testing reports, etc.) shall be submitted to the Lead Agency and Consulting Tribe[s] for review and comment. After approval of all parties, the final reports are to be submitted to the appropriate Information Center (IC), and the Consulting Tribe[s].

Timing/Implementation: After the qualified archaeologist, in consultation with the tribal monitor, determines there is no chance of archaeological discoveries as a result of ground disturbing activities.

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

Following implementation of mitigation measure TRC-1 through TRC-8, impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels.

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 primary objective of the proposed Project is the construction, structural upgrade, and consolidation of electrical power and telecommunication infrastructure across a 6.5-mile utility corridor. Because the Project represents an electrical and telecommunications upgrade, its physical construction has the potential to generate environmental impacts. However, as analyzed throughout this document, all potential physical environmental effects resulting from the replacement, relocation, and construction of these electric power and telecommunications facilities will be reduced to a less than significant level through the implementation of project-specific mitigation measures.

- b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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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? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

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 no waste. 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? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed Project involves structural and electrical modifications across a 6.5-mile utility alignment running between the Avenue 58 Substation and Avenue 48 Substation. Because the utility corridor follows major regional arterial roadways (such as Jefferson Street) that straddle the municipal boundaries of the City of La Quinta and the City of Indio, the construction footprint has the potential to physically interfere with emergency responses along streets designated as critical evacuation and emergency response corridors in the Riverside

County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan, as well as the Safety Elements of the local cities' General Plans.

The Project requires the replacement of power poles, followed by the pulling and stringing of the transmission conductor and optical ground wires. Due to the proximity of the existing poles to the roadway, heavy construction equipment (such as cranes, bucket trucks, and line pullers) will occasionally need to operate from the paved shoulders or travel lanes of these arterial streets.

If construction activities or lane closures are executed without formal, regional coordination, they have the potential to inadvertently delay emergency response vehicles (such as Riverside County Fire Department or Cal Fire rigs) navigating the corridor or conflict with an active emergency evacuation order.

Mitigation Measure HAZ-2 requires the preparation of a comprehensive Traffic Control Plan (TCP) that explicitly mandates the preservation of emergency vehicle access at all times and requires formal notification to local emergency service providers before any lane closures or line-stringing blocks begin. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-2, impacts associated with the impairment of an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan will be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

- 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?
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

Less Than Significant. As verified through CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) mapping for Riverside County (Calfire, 2026), the entire 6.5-mile physical alignment is situated in a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) categorized as Unzoned/Unclassified or Moderate Fire Hazard Severity. The Project is not located within a State Responsibility Area (SRA) nor a designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ).

Because the Project replaces aging utility infrastructure with wind-resistant steel and wood structures built to modern CPUC General Order 95 safety standards, and because the flat, urbanized valley floor lacks heavy wildland fuel connectivity, terrain and wind factors will not exacerbate wildfire risks or expose people to significant wildfire air pollutants. Impacts would be less than significant.

- 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 involves structural, electrical, and telecommunications upgrades across approximately 6.5 miles of an existing overhead 92kV utility alignment. Because the Project replaces aging utility infrastructure with modern, wind-resistant poles and automated protective relaying within an existing right-of-way, it will not require secondary

	Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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infrastructure that exacerbates fire risk or causes ongoing environmental degradation. Impacts would be less than significant.

- 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 involves structural, electrical, and telecommunications upgrades across approximately 6.5 miles of an existing overhead 92kV utility alignment. Because the Project does not alter surface drainage, burn native slopes, or sit down-gradient of unstable, fire-prone topography, it will not expose people or structures to significant risks from downslope or downstream post-fire flooding or landslides. No impact would occur.

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?
- ☐
☐
☒
☐

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed Project involves structural, electrical, and telecommunications upgrades across approximately 6.5 miles of an existing overhead 92kV utility alignment. The area impacted by the construction is within urban and developed areas within and adjacent to existing roadways and transmission line easements. As identified by the biological assessment, the site has the potential to provide nesting and foraging opportunities for bird species covered by the MBTA. Implementation of mitigation measures BIO-1 through BIO-6, GEO-1, and TRC-1 through TRC-8 would reduce potentially significant effects on biological, paleontological, archaeological, and tribal cultural resources to less-than-significant levels. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. 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 existing needs and future growth in the area that has been planned for by the City of Indio, City of La Quinta, and County of Riverside. With implementation of the mitigation measures identified throughout this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, the Project's incremental contribution to cumulative environmental impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. Therefore, cumulative impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

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

Potentially Significant Impact (PSI)	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated (PSUMI)	Less Than Significant Impact (LTSI)	No Impact (NI)
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Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. 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. Potential construction-related effects on human beings, including effects associated with air quality, hazardous materials, noise, traffic, aviation safety, and emergency access, would be temporary, controlled through compliance with applicable regulations, or reduced through implementation of the mitigation measures identified in this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. Therefore, impacts on human beings would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

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

Jaime Asbury, General Manager

Efrain V. Sanchez, Project Manager IID-PMO

B. AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

United States Department of Fish and Wildlife

South Coastal Information Center

Office of Historic Preservation

C. ENGINEER AND TECHNICAL STUDIES

Starflower Environmental. – Biological Resources Report

ASM Affiliates – Cultural Resources Report

V. REFERENCES

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SECTION 4

VI. MITIGATION, MONITORING, AND REPORTING PROGRAM (MMRP)

Measure No.	Mitigation Measure	Monitoring Responsibility	Timing
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES			
BIO-1	Preconstruction Biological Resource Survey. No more than three days before initial ground disturbance, vegetation removal, pole removal, or equipment setup, a qualified biologist shall survey the applicable work areas and accessible surrounding habitat for special-status species, active burrows, sensitive plants, aquatic features, and other biological constraints. A qualified biologist shall possess a degree in biology, ecology, wildlife management, botany, or a related field; at least three years of relevant field experience; demonstrable experience with the species and habitats being evaluated; and any permits or authorizations required for handling or survey activities. Sensitive resources shall be flagged or otherwise demarcated for avoidance. If a listed species or occupied protected resource is found within an impact area, work shall stop in the vicinity until IID and the biologist establish an authorized avoidance, monitoring, relocation, consultation, or permitting approach. Wildlife shall not be handled or relocated without appropriate authorization.	<i>Qualified Biologist and Imperial Irrigation District.</i>	<i>No more than three days before initial disturbance at each work area.</i>
BIO-2	Preconstruction Nesting Bird Survey. If construction occurs during the bird breeding season, generally February 1 through August 31 for raptors and March 15 through August 31 for most other migratory birds, a qualified avian biologist shall conduct a nesting-bird survey no more than three days before initial disturbance. The survey shall include the work area and adjacent habitat with potential to be affected by construction activity or noise. If an active nest is identified, the biologist shall establish an avoidance buffer. Unless a different distance is supported by site-specific conditions and documented by the biologist, the initial buffer shall be 500 feet for raptors and 250 feet for other protected birds. Buffers may be adjusted based on species, nest location, nesting stage, existing disturbance, topography, visual screening, and the type and intensity of construction. Work shall not occur within the buffer until the nest is no longer active or monitoring demonstrates that construction can proceed without causing nest failure or abandonment.	<i>Qualified Avian Biologist and Imperial Irrigation District.</i>	<i>During the applicable breeding season and no more than three days before initial disturbance.</i>
BIO-3	Burrowing Owl and Sandy-Habitat Species Protection. Before disturbance in open agricultural land, pasture, vacant or ruderal land, canal banks, road shoulders, Myoma fine sand, native desert scrub, or other suitable habitat, a qualified biologist shall conduct focused clearance for burrowing owl and other special-status species appropriate to the	<i>Qualified Biologist and Imperial Irrigation District</i>	<i>Before disturbance in suitable open, burrow, sandy, or native desert habitat.</i>

Measure No.	Mitigation Measure	Monitoring Responsibility	Timing
	habitat. Burrowing-owl take-avoidance surveys shall follow current CDFW guidance and shall include an initial survey within 14 days before disturbance and a final survey within 24 hours before disturbance where suitable habitat is present. Unpaved loose-sand habitat shall be evaluated for Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard, flat-tailed horned lizard, Coachella Valley milk-vetch, Palm Springs pocket mouse, Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel, and other sand-associated species identified in Appendices B and C. Work areas shall be shifted to developed or previously disturbed surfaces where feasible. If an occupied burrow, listed species, or occupied special-status plant population is identified, work shall not proceed within the affected area until species-specific avoidance, agency coordination, take authorization, and mitigation requirements are satisfied.		
BIO-4	Sensitive Natural Community and Aquatic Resource Avoidance. Project disturbance shall avoid the mapped Prosopis sensitive natural community, field-verified riparian vegetation, riverine and lacustrine habitat, canals, drains, ponds, streambeds, and other aquatic features to the maximum extent feasible. Where a sensitive community or aquatic feature occurs near a work area, a qualified biologist shall verify its limits and establish a clearly marked exclusion area. A minimum 25-foot setback shall be maintained where feasible, unless a larger distance is required by an agency, permit, or site-specific condition. If avoidance is infeasible, IID shall complete the applicable aquatic-resource delineation, CDFW notification, Clean Water Act authorization, water-quality certification, CVMSHCP review, restoration, and compensatory mitigation before disturbance.	<i>Qualified Biologist, Imperial Irrigation District, and applicable permitting agencies.</i>	<i>During final work-area layout and throughout construction.</i>
BIO-5	Limits of Disturbance and Worker Environmental Awareness. Approved pole work areas, pull and tension sites, access routes, staging areas, and exclusion zones shall be shown on construction plans or environmental exhibits and clearly marked in the field where necessary. Before beginning work, construction personnel shall receive environmental awareness training addressing special-status species, nesting birds, burrowing owl, sensitive natural communities, aquatic features, vehicle speed, trash control, wildlife encounters, spill prevention, and stop-work procedures. Vehicles and equipment shall remain within approved roads and work areas. Temporary disturbance shall be restored or stabilized after construction. Open excavations shall be covered or provided with wildlife escape ramps when unattended, and work areas shall be inspected for trapped wildlife before daily activities begin.	<i>Construction Contractor, Qualified Biologist, and Imperial Irrigation District.</i>	<i>Before and during construction.</i>

Measure No.	Mitigation Measure	Monitoring Responsibility	Timing
BIO-6	CVMSHCP Consistency. IID shall implement the CVMSHCP requirements applicable to public infrastructure, operation and maintenance, covered species, natural communities, conservation areas, and adjacency to conserved lands. Where Project activities occur within or adjacent to mapped CVMSHCP resources, the construction package shall incorporate applicable measures addressing lighting, drainage, toxics, noise, invasive species, barriers, grading, and species protection. Required coordination, fees, joint project review, take coverage, restoration, or compensation shall be completed before the affected activity begins.	<i>Imperial Irrigation District in coordination with the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission and applicable jurisdictions.</i>	<i>Before construction and throughout Project implementation.</i>
VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS			
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 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.	<i>Paleontological Monitor and Imperial Irrigation District.</i>	<i>During construction involving drilling or excavations to depths of 3 feet or more.</i>
IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS			
HAZ-1	Aeronautical Obstruction and ALUC Consistency Review. Prior to the issuance of municipal encroachment permits or the start of ground-disturbing activities for segments south of Avenue 50, the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) and its contractors shall ensure compliance with the following aviation safety standards: 1) ALUC Submittal: Final engineered pole locations and maximum structural heights for the southern portion of the alignment shall be submitted to the Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) to confirm consistency with the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport ALUCP height and safety criteria. 2) FAA Form 7460-1 Filing: In accordance with Code of Federal Regulations Title 14, Part 77, IID shall file Form 7460-1 (Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration) with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for any replacement structures that exceed a 200:1 imaginary gliding surface from the nearest runway.	<i>Imperial Irrigation District</i>	<i>Prior to the initiation of any on-site grading.</i>

Measure No.	Mitigation Measure	Monitoring Responsibility	Timing
HAZ-2	Construction Traffic Control and Emergency Service Coordination. Before ground-disturbing activities, pole removal, conductor stringing, or other work that could affect a public roadway, the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) and its construction contractor shall prepare and implement a Traffic Control Plan (TCP) in coordination with the City of La Quinta, the City of Indio, Riverside County, and other affected roadway authorities, as applicable. The TCP shall include the following requirements: Traffic-control measures. The TCP shall identify anticipated lane closures, temporary traffic stoppages, construction hours, detour routes, flagger locations, advance-warning signs, and other measures necessary to maintain safe traffic circulation. Lane closures and temporary traffic stoppages shall be limited to the shortest duration practicable. Emergency access. Unobstructed access for fire, law-enforcement, ambulance, and other emergency-response vehicles shall be maintained through or around the construction area at all times. Construction vehicles, equipment, materials, and temporary traffic-control devices shall not block emergency-access routes, fire lanes, fire hydrants, or access to adjacent properties. Flaggers and construction personnel shall be prepared to suspend work and provide immediate passage to emergency vehicles. A complete roadway closure shall not occur unless an appropriate detour has been approved by the affected roadway authority and coordinated in advance with the applicable emergency-service providers. Temporary traffic stoppages required for conductor-stringing activities shall be coordinated and controlled so that the roadway can be reopened promptly for emergency vehicles. Advance Notification. IID or its contractor shall provide written notice to affected fire departments, law-enforcement agencies, ambulance providers, public works departments, and other applicable emergency-service providers at least 72 hours before a planned lane closure, roadway closure, detour, or conductor-stringing operation that could temporarily interrupt traffic. The notice shall identify the location, date, anticipated work hours, expected duration, proposed detour or access arrangements, and a 24-hour construction contact. Any material schedule change shall be communicated to the affected agencies as soon as practicable.	<i>Imperial Irrigation District construction contractor, and the affected roadway authority.,</i>	<i>The TCP shall be approved before construction activities that could affect a public roadway and shall be implemented throughout construction.</i>
XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES			
TRC-1	Native American Treatment Agreement. Prior to the issuance of grading permits, the applicant shall enter into a Tribal Monitoring Agreement with the Morongo Band of Mission Indians for the project. The Tribal Monitor(s) shall be on-site during all ground-disturbing activities (including, but not limited to, clearing, grubbing, tree and bush removal, grading, trenching, fence post placement and removal, construction excavation, excavation for all utility and irrigation lines, and landscaping phases of any kind). The Tribal Monitor(s) shall have the authority to temporarily divert, redirect, or halt the ground-disturbing activities to	<i>Imperial Irrigation District in coordination with the Morongo and Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.</i>	<i>Prior to any development activities.</i>

Measure No.	Mitigation Measure	Monitoring Responsibility	Timing
	allow identification, evaluation, and potential recovery of cultural resources and/or tribal cultural resources.		
TRC-2	Retention of Archaeologist. Prior to any ground-disturbing activities (including, but not limited to, clearing, grubbing, tree and bush removal, grading, trenching, fence post replacement and removal, construction excavation, excavation for all utility and irrigation lines, and landscaping phases of any kind), and prior to the issuance of grading permits, the Applicant shall retain a qualified archaeologist who meets the U.S. Secretary of the Interior Standards (SOI). The archaeologist shall be present during all ground-disturbing activities to identify any known or suspected archaeological and/or cultural resources. The archaeologist will conduct a Cultural Resource Sensitivity Training, in conjunction with the Tribe[s] Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), and/or designated Tribal Representative. The training session will focus on the archaeological and tribal cultural resources that may be encountered during ground-disturbing activities as well as the procedures to be followed in such an event.	<i>Imperial Irrigation District in coordination with the Morongo and Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.</i>	<i>Prior to any development activities and during ground disturbing activities.</i>
TRC-3	Cultural Resource Management Plan. Prior to any ground-disturbing activities the project archaeologist shall develop a Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP) and/or Archaeological Monitoring and Treatment Plan (AMTP) to address the details, timing, and responsibilities of all archaeological and cultural resource activities that occur on the project site. This Plan shall be written in consultation with the Consulting Tribe[s] and at minimum, shall include the following: (1) the approved Mitigation Measures (MM)/Conditions of Approval (COA), (2) procedures for each MM/COA, (3) the contact information for all pertinent parties, (4) parties' responsibilities, and (5) an overview of the project schedule.	<i>Imperial Irrigation District in coordination with the Morongo and Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.</i>	<i>Prior to any development activities.</i>
TRC-4	Pre-Grade Meeting. The retained qualified archeologist and Consulting Tribe[s] representative shall attend the pre-grade meeting with the grading contractors to explain and coordinate the requirements of the monitoring plan.	<i>Imperial Irrigation District in coordination with the Morongo and Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.</i>	<i>Prior to any ground disturbing activities.</i>
TRC-5	On-site Monitoring. During all ground-disturbing activities the qualified archaeologist and the Tribal Monitor(s) shall be on-site full-time. The frequency of inspections shall depend on the rate of excavation, the materials excavated, and any discoveries of Tribal Cultural Resources as defined in California Public Resources Code Section 21074. Archaeological and Native American monitoring will be discontinued when the depth of grading and the soil conditions no longer retain the potential to contain cultural deposits. The qualified archaeologist, in consultation with the Tribal Monitor(s), shall be responsible for determining the duration and frequency of monitoring.	<i>Imperial Irrigation District in coordination with the Morongo and Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.</i>	<i>During ground disturbing activities as determined by the qualified archaeologist.</i>

Measure No.	Mitigation Measure	Monitoring Responsibility	Timing
TRC-6	Inadvertent Discovery of Cultural Resources. In the event that previously unidentified cultural resources are discovered /unearthed during construction, the qualified archaeologist and the Tribal Monitor(s) shall have the authority to temporarily divert and/or temporarily halt ground-disturbance activities in the area of discovery to allow for the evaluation of potentially significant cultural resources. Isolates and clearly non-significant deposits shall be minimally documented in the field and collected so the monitored ground-disturbing activity can proceed. If a potentially significant cultural resource(s) is discovered, work shall stop within a 60-foot perimeter of the discovery and an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) physical demarcation/barrier constructed. All work shall be diverted away from the vicinity of the find(s), so that the qualified archaeologist and Tribal Monitor[s] can evaluate it/they. The archaeologist shall notify the Lead Agency and Consulting Tribe[s] of said discovery. The qualified archaeologist, in consultation with the Lead Agency, the Consulting Tribe[s], and the Tribal monitor, shall determine the significance of the discovered resource. A recommendation for the treatment and disposition of the Tribal Cultural Resource shall be made by the qualified archaeologist in consultation with the Tribe[s] and the Tribal monitor[s] and be submitted to the Lead Agency for review and approval. Below are the possible treatments and dispositions of significant cultural resources in order of CEQA preference: A. Full avoidance. B. If avoidance is not feasible, Preservation in place. If Preservation in place is not feasible, all items shall be reburied in an area away from any future impacts and reside in a permanent conservation easement or Deed Restriction. C. If all other options are proven to be infeasible, data recovery through excavation and then curation in a Curation Facility that meets the Federal Curation Standards (36 CFR 79). Unless otherwise agreed upon by all parties, all removed items from the Project shall be temporarily curated on-site in a secure and locked location (i.e., Conex box, a lockable office or drawer with restricted access to it, etc.). A periodic inventory must be maintained and provided to Consulting Tribe[s].	<i>Imperial Irrigation District in coordination with the Morongo and Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.</i>	<i>During ground disturbing activities.</i>
TRC-7	Inadvertent Discovery of Human Remains. The Morongo Band of Mission Indians requests the following specific conditions to be imposed in order to protect Native American human remains and/or cremations. No photographs are to be taken except by the coroner, with written approval by the Consulting Tribe[s]. A. Should human remains and/or cremations be encountered on the surface or during any and all ground-disturbing activities (i.e., clearing, grubbing, tree and bush removal,	<i>Imperial Irrigation District in coordination with the Morongo and Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.</i>	<i>During ground disturbing activities.</i>

Measure No.	Mitigation Measure	Monitoring Responsibility	Timing
	grading, trenching, fence post placement and removal, construction excavation, excavation for all water supply, electrical, and irrigation lines, and landscaping phases of any kind), work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery shall immediately stop within a 100-foot perimeter of the discovery. The area shall be protected by the establishment of an ESA with a marked boundary. Project personnel/observers will be restricted from entry into the ESA. The County Coroner is to be contacted within 24 hours of discovery. The County Coroner has 48 hours to make his/her determination pursuant to State and Safety Code §7050.5. and Public Resources Code (PRC) § 5097.98. B. In the event that the human remains and/or cremations are identified as Native American, the Coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) within 24 hours of determination pursuant to subdivision (c) of HSC §7050.5. C. The NAHC shall immediately notify the person or persons it believes to be the Most Likely Descendant (MLD). The MLD has 48 hours, upon being granted access to the Project site, to inspect the site of discovery and make his/her recommendation for final treatment and disposition, with appropriate dignity, of the remains and all associated grave goods pursuant to PRC §5097.98. D. If the Morongo Band of Mission Indians has been named the MLD or Co-MLD, the Tribe may wish to rebury the human remains and/or cremation and sacred items in their place of discovery with no further disturbance where they will reside in perpetuity. The place(s) of reburial will not be disclosed by any party and is exempt from the California Public Records Act (California Government Code § 6254[r]). Reburial location of human remains and/or cremations will be determined by the Tribe's MLD, the landowner, and the City Planning Department.		
TRC-8	The final report[s] created as a part of the project (CRMP/AMTP, isolate records, site records, survey reports, testing reports, etc.) shall be submitted to the Lead Agency and Consulting Tribe[s] for review and comment. After approval of all parties, the final reports are to be submitted to the appropriate Information Center (IC), and the Consulting Tribe[s].	<i>Imperial Irrigation District in coordination with the Morongo and Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.</i>	<i>After the qualified archaeologist, in consultation with the tribal monitor, determines there is no chance of archaeological discoveries as a result of ground disturbing activities.</i>