4.15 Transportation and Traffic

This section evaluates the traffic and transportation impacts associated with the Proposed Project. This section also discusses the potential impacts and APMs that will be implemented as part of the Proposed Project design.

The Proposed Project components that do not involve increased transportation or traffic impacts were not assessed. These components include installation of upgraded relay systems and equipment at the Newhall, Chatsworth, and San Fernando Substations and construction support activities.

4.15.1 Existing Setting

The primary mode of transportation in the area of the Proposed Project is vehicular travel on roadways. The transportation system in the area of the Santa Clarita Valley and the Porter Ranch area near the Storage Field, stretching through Los Angeles County and Ventura County, includes roadways, multi-use trails, bike paths, bus transits, and commuter rail.

Roadways are typically ranked according to guidelines set forth by the Highway Capacity Manual (1997) that assigns a Level of Service (LOS). LOS is a professional industry standard by which the operating conditions of a given roadway segment or intersection are measured. LOS ratings are based on various factors such as speed, travel time, ability to maneuver, traffic interruptions, and safety. The level of service criteria utilized in this section is consistent with the standards outlined in the City of Santa Clarita's and City of Los Angeles' Traffic Impact Report Guidelines. The highest ranked roadways are designated LOS A, representing free-flow of traffic, and the lowest ranked roadways are designated LOS F, representing forced or broken-down flow. The City of Santa Clarita General Plan Circulation Element (2001) includes guidelines for the acceptable LOS for regional planning. The guidelines establish an LOS "C" as acceptable level of operation for residential and industrial areas and LOS "D" for commercial, freeway ramps and central business districts (CBDs). Signalized intersections in the City of Los Angeles use the Critical Movement Analysis (CMA) to evaluate an intersections level of service. However, the intersection of Tampa Ave./Sesnon Blvd. is unsignalized, and therefore the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) methodology was used which calculates the level of service based on intersection delay.

The existing street system within the Santa Clarita Valley, including the city of Santa Clarita and the community of Newhall, consists of The Old Road, Wiley Canyon Road, Lyons Avenue, and Calgrove Boulevard. The City of Santa Clarita General Plan Circulation Element classifies a Major Arterial Highway as having at least six-lanes, divided, with no-on-street parking. The Old Road and parts of Wiley Canyon Road have been designated as Major Arterial Highways. Wiley Canyon Road north of Lyons Avenue is classified as a Major Arterial Highway. Lyons Avenue is classified as a Major Arterial Highway from The Old Road to Sierra Highway. The City of Santa Clarita General Plan Circulation Element classifies a Secondary Highway as a four-lane divided roadway with no on-street parking. Calgrove Boulevard is classified as a Secondary Highway. Wiley Canyon Road, south of Lyons Avenue to Calgrove Boulevard is currently constructed as a two-lane undivided roadway with intermittent on-street parking.

Existing traffic through the Sesnon/Tampa intersection meets the minimum criteria to warrant a traffic signal based on peak hour, but currently operates with an acceptable level of service during the peak hours.

4.15.2 Significance Criteria

The following significance criteria are based on the CEQA Guidelines. A project is determined to cause a potentially significant impact if it would:

- Cause an increase in traffic, which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections);
- Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways;
- Result in change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that result in substantial safety risks;
- Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g. farm equipment);
- Result in inadequate emergency access;
- Result in inadequate parking capacity; or
- Conflict with adopted policies, plans or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks).

4.15.3 Applicant Proposed Measures

The following APMs will be implemented during construction.

APM-TT-01: The Proponent will implement a Commuter Plan that includes a designated off-site parking area which has adequate parking capacity for the maximum 150 workers, and a shuttle that will transport worker crews, ~ 10 workers per trip, from the parking area to the work site.

APM-TT-02: A Traffic Control Plan will be prepared in accordance with the latest version of the WATCH Manual, created by the California Joint Utility Traffic Control Commission, and will be implemented by SoCalGas and SCE as needed.

4.15.4 Environmental Impacts

The potential impact to traffic from construction and operation of the Proposed Project was evaluated using the stated CEQA significance criteria and is presented in this section. For the purpose of presenting potential traffic resource impacts, CEQA criteria were evaluated and are discussed separately for construction and operations. Because the project is not expected to have any impact due to operation of the Proposed Project, the CEQA criteria was only applied to potential impacts due to construction.

4.15.4.1 Construction Impacts

Construction of the Proposed Project would not result in impacts for the following CEQA criteria:

Would the Proposed Project result in change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that result in substantial safety risks?

No operating airports or heliports are within a close proximity of the Proposed Project. Helicopters may be used during construction activities associated with the proposed SCE 66 kV sub-transmission modification if helicopter use is required for cable installation, existing SCE helicopter pads and laydown areas will be used. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not include any features that would disrupt or affect air traffic.

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

During construction activities within the Storage Field, the Proposed Project is expected to shuttle ~ 150 construction workers from an off-site parking area to the site. The off-site parking area has not been determined, but is proposed to be within 5 to 10 miles of the Storage Field entrance. For analysis purposes, a conservative estimate of 10 workers per shuttle trip (or 15 round trips per hour) was assumed. It is more likely that the vehicle occupancy would be greater, thereby reducing the amount of shuttle trips, but this provides a "worst case" condition. The increase in traffic associated with these additional trips has been evaluated at the intersection of Tampa Avenue/Sesnon Boulevard, the analysis and results are provided in Appendix B.3 Traffic Study. The current intersection LOS is rated "B" for AM, and "A" for PM. Based on the intersection operations, this location is anticipated to operate at acceptable service levels with the additional trips. The LOS would not change as a result of the Proposed Project. With the implementation of APMs, the impacts would be less than significant.

There would be up to 10 delivery and/or construction vehicle trips visiting the Proposed Project site on a daily basis. Based on the intersection operations, this location is anticipated to operate at acceptable service levels with the additional trips. The impacts would be less than significant.

Would the Proposed Project exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?

A temporary lane closure on Wiley Canyon Road may be required as part of Proposed Project's construction activities. Based on the level of service analysis provided in Appendix B.3, the intersection of Wiley Canyon Road/Lyons Avenue is expected to operate at acceptable levels in conjunction with the lane closure. The impacts would be less than significant.

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

A temporary lane closure on Wiley Canyon Road may be required as part of the Proposed Project's construction activities. With the implementation of a Traffic Control Plan, as established in APM-TT-02, the impact would be less than significant.

Would the Proposed Project result in inadequate emergency access?

Work associated with placing new conductors and poles along the 66 kV alignment and at San Fernando substation will require pulling conductor across roads and/or possibly require a lane closure. In these situations, construction activities would be coordinated with the local jurisdiction so as not to cause closure of any emergency access route. Flaggers may briefly hold traffic back while conductor is pulled across a roadway, but emergency vehicles would be provided access even in the event of temporary road closures. Therefore, emergency access would not be directly impacted by construction of the proposed Project because all streets would remain open to emergency vehicles at all times during construction activities.

Would the Proposed Project result in inadequate parking capacity?

Parking during construction of the SCE Proposed Project components, including the removal of existing LSTs and wooden H-frames, TSP installation, and re-conductoring, would occur at an existing SCE marshalling yard or at the other substation sites. Because the construction of the SCE Project components would not require the use of public parking areas, there would be no impacts to parking from construction of the Proposed Project.

Parking during construction of the Proposed Project components within the Storage Field, including construction of the proposed Central Compressor Station, proposed PPL, proposed office trailer and guard house relocations, would occur at a designated off-site parking area. With the implementation of APM-TT-01, there would be a less than significant impact associated with the Proposed Project.

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

The Proposed Project would not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs that support alternative transportation in the Proposed Project area since such policies, plans, or programs do no impose requirement on this project and no physical alterations to alternative transportation facilities would occur.

4.15.4.2 Operation Impacts

There are no anticipated impacts associated with operation of the Proposed Project.

4.15.5 Mitigation Measures

The Proposed Project was determined to have **no impact** due to operation and **a less than significant impact without mitigation** due to construction; therefore no mitigation is required or proposed.

4.15.6 References

City of Santa Clarita. 2008. *City of Santa Clarita General Plan* (1991) http://www.santa-clarita.com/cityhall/cd/planning/general_plan.asp Accessed April 2009.

City of Los Angeles. 2008. *City of Los Angeles General Plan* (2001) http://cityplanning.lacity.org/ Accessed April 2009.