

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) is the lead agency responsible for preparation of this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Sylmar Ground Return System Replacement Project (Project or proposed Project). This EIR will inform the public and decision-makers at local, State, and federal permitting agencies of potentially significant impacts associated with the Project and identify means of reducing or eliminating those impacts.

LADWP is proposing to replace the existing underground and marine electrical cables and the existing marine electrode array portions of the Sylmar Ground Return System (SGRS), although not in the same alignment. The existing SGRS is the ground return system for the Pacific Direct Current Intertie Transmission Line (PDCI), which transmits bulk direct current (DC) power between Los Angeles and the Pacific Northwest; the PDCI cannot operate without a functioning ground return system. Due to system deficiencies associated with the land-side underground and marine (that portion of the electrode system located in the Pacific Ocean) components of the existing SGRS, its replacement within the limits addressed herein is proposed to maintain the reliability and stability of the power generation and delivery system for Southern California; to continue to meet current and projected demand for power; and to help increase the available share of renewable resource energy.

### **1.2 CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)**

Under CEQA, as amended (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21080(a)), an environmental review document must be prepared, reviewed, and certified by the decision-making body before action is taken on any non-exempt discretionary project proposed to be carried out or approved by a state or local public agency in the state of California.

#### **1.2.1 Purpose of the EIR**

This EIR is an informational disclosure document for LADWP, responsible agencies, and other interested parties. The following are included among the stated purposes of an EIR in the CEQA Guidelines:

- Disclose significant environmental impacts that are expected to result from the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed project.
- Indicate ways in which significant impacts can be avoided or mitigated.
- Identify any unavoidable adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated.
- Identify feasible alternatives to the project that would substantially lessen or eliminate significant adverse impacts.

This Draft EIR has been distributed for review by responsible agencies, trustee agencies with resources affected by the Project, and other interested agencies, organizations, and individuals. The City of Los Angeles Board of Water and Power Commissioners (LADWP Board or Board) must consider the conclusions of the Final EIR, which will include this Draft EIR, comments received on the Draft EIR, LADWP responses to those comments, and any changes to the Draft EIR, before certifying the Final EIR and taking action on the proposed Project.

Reviews of the Draft EIR should focus on the adequacy of the document in identifying and analyzing the potential environmental effects, the determination of significance of those impacts, and the effectiveness of mitigation measures.

## 1.2.2 Terminology Used in this Document

CEQA documents include the use of specific terminology. To aid the reader in understanding terminology and language used throughout this document, the following CEQA terms are defined below:

**Project:** The whole of an action that has the potential to result in a direct or indirect physical change in the environment.

**Environment:** The baseline physical conditions that exist in the area before commencement of the proposed Project and that would be potentially affected or altered by the proposed Project. The environment is where significant direct or indirect impacts could occur as a result of Project implementation, and it includes such elements as air, biological resources (i.e., flora and fauna), land, ambient noise, mineral resources, water, and objects of aesthetic or cultural significance.

**Direct impacts:** Impacts that would result in a direct physical change in the environment as a result of Project implementation. Direct impacts would occur at the same time and place as the Project.

**Indirect or secondary impacts:** Impacts that would result from proposed Project implementation but that may occur later in time or farther removed in distance. Indirect or secondary impacts include growth-inducing impacts.

**Significant impact on the environment:** A substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions in the proposed Project area that is the result of proposed Project implementation. An economic or social change may only be considered a significant impact on the environment if it results in a physical change.

**Mitigation measures:** Project-specific actions that, if adopted, avoid or substantially reduce the proposed Project's significant environmental effects. Mitigation measures may:

- avoid the impact altogether;
- minimize the impact by reducing the degree or magnitude of the action and its implications;
- rectify the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;
- reduce or eliminate the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the Project; or
- compensate for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

**Best Management Practices (BMPs):** Measures that avoid, minimize, or reduce/eliminate potential impacts. BMPs are distinguished from mitigation measures because they are: 1) requirements of existing policies, practices, and measures required by law, regulation, or local policy; 2) ongoing, regularly occurring practices; and 3) not unique to this proposed Project. The BMPs identified in this Draft EIR are inherently part of the proposed Project and are therefore accounted for in the assessment of impacts and are not additional mitigation measures proposed as a result of the significance findings from the CEQA environmental review process.

**Cumulative impacts:** Two or more individual impacts that, when considered together, are considerable or that compound or increase other environmental impacts. The following statements also apply when considering cumulative impacts:

- The individual impacts may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.
- The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment that results from the incremental impact of the Project when added to other closely related past, present, and

probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over time.

Terms used in this document to describe the level of significance of adverse impacts are defined as follows:

- **No Impact:** An impact to a specific environmental resource would not occur.
- **Less than significant:** An impact that is adverse but that falls below the defined thresholds of significance and does not require mitigation.
- **Significant:** An impact that exceeds the defined thresholds of significance. A significant impact would or could potentially cause a substantial adverse change in the environment and would require incorporation of feasible mitigation measures to eliminate the impact or reduce it to less than significant.
- **Significant and unavoidable:** An impact that cannot be eliminated or lessened to a less-than-significant level through incorporation of mitigation measures.

### **1.3 PUBLIC REVIEW AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

CEQA requires lead agencies to solicit, record, and evaluate feedback from other agencies and the interested public to aid decision-making. Additionally, CEQA requires the Project to be monitored after it has been permitted to ensure that mitigation measures are implemented, as appropriate.

Public and agency participation in the CEQA process for the proposed Project has and will continue to occur through the steps described below.

#### **1.3.1 Notice of Preparation/Initial Study (SCH ID # 2010091044)**

In compliance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was issued on September 24, 2010. The notice briefly described the proposed Project, Project location, environmental review process, potential environmental effects, and opportunities for public involvement. A map was also included that illustrated the Project area.

Copies of the NOP were mailed to the Office of Planning and Research (State Clearinghouse) for issuance to state agencies. It was also mailed to approximately 100 agencies, organizations, local governments, and other parties known to be interested in the Project. The NOP solicited input regarding the scope and content of the environmental issues to be addressed in the Draft EIR.

The public comment period for the NOP began on September 24, 2010 and ended on October 25, 2010. Refer to Chapter 6 for a summary of public meetings that were conducted and scoping comment issues that were raised during the comment period.

#### **1.3.2 Draft EIR Preparation/Notice of Completion**

A Notice of Completion (NOC) was filed with the State Clearinghouse to initiate the public review period pursuant to PRC Section 21161.

This Draft EIR was distributed directly to agencies and organizations, and made publicly available for review and comment in accordance with Section 15087 of the CEQA Guidelines and PRC Section 21092(b)(3). The Draft EIR and appendices are available for review at the locations shown in Table 1-1 and online ([www.ladwp.com/envnotices](http://www.ladwp.com/envnotices)).

**TABLE 1-1 DOCUMENT REPOSITORY SITES**

REPOSITORY SITE	ADDRESS
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	111 North Hope Street, Room 1044 Los Angeles, CA 90012
Donald Bruce Kaufman – Brentwood Branch Library	11820 San Vicente Boulevard Brentwood, CA 90049
City of Santa Monica Main Library	601 Santa Monica Boulevard Santa Monica, CA 90401
Palisades Branch Library	861 Alma Real Drive Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

Interested members of the public are invited to comment on the information presented in this Draft EIR during the 45-day review period.

### **1.3.3 Preparation and Certification of Final EIR and MMRP**

The Final EIR will include comments received on the Draft EIR and responses to those comments raising issues related to the adequacy of the analysis in the Draft EIR, along with any necessary corrections to the Draft EIR. In addition, Section 15097 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that public agencies adopt a program for monitoring mitigation measures that would reduce or eliminate significant impacts on the environment. Accordingly, a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) will be prepared for the proposed Project.

The LADWP Board of Water and Power Commissioners will consider all comments on the Draft EIR and certify the Final EIR before deciding whether or not to approve the Project.

## **1.4 EIR FORMAT AND CONTENT**

### **1.4.1 Scope of this EIR**

The analysis contained in the Initial Study helped to establish specific issues to be addressed in this Draft EIR. That evaluation focused on the potentially significant impacts involved with the construction and operation of the Proposed Project. Potentially significant effects may occur relative to the environmental resource topics listed below. These topics are addressed in detail in Chapter 3 of this Draft EIR:

- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Noise
- Transportation and Traffic
- Marine Resources

### **1.4.2 Required Contents and Organization**

CEQA Guidelines require that an EIR contain certain essential elements of discussion. Table 1-2 identifies each element that must be included in this EIR along with a reference to the corresponding section where the elements are discussed.

**TABLE 1-2 REQUIRED EIR DISCUSSION ELEMENTS**

SECTION/CHAPTER OF EIR	CEQA REQUIRED ELEMENT (CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION)
Table of Contents	Table of Contents (Section 15122)
Executive Summary	Summary (Section 15123)
Chapter 1	List of Agencies Expected to Use the EIR List of Required Permits and Approvals List of Related Review and Consultation Requirements
Chapter 2	Project Description (Section 15124) Regional Map Project Objectives Precise location and boundaries of the Project Project's Characteristics
Chapter 3	Environmental Setting and Impacts (Section 15125) Effects Found Not to Be Significant (Section 15128) Environmental Impact Analysis (Section 15126) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant Environmental Effects</li> <li>• Mitigation Measures</li> </ul> Cumulative Impacts (Section 15130) Long-Term Implications of the Proposed Project (Section 15126.2)
Chapter 4	Alternatives to the Proposed Project (Section 15126)
Chapter 5	Other CEQA Considerations (Section 15126.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant Environmental Effects that Cannot Be Avoided</li> <li>• Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes</li> <li>• Growth-Inducing Impacts</li> </ul>
Chapter 6	Coordination and Consultation, List of Preparers (Section 15129)
Chapter 7	Acronyms
Chapter 8	References (Section 15129)

The contents of this Draft EIR are organized in the following manner.

**Executive Summary:** The Executive Summary of the EIR provides the reader summary of the Project and its implications. The Executive Summary includes a brief description of the Project, a summary of environmental impacts and mitigation measures that would reduce those impacts, a summary comparison of the Project alternatives, and a description of areas of controversy known to the lead agency.

**Chapter 1. Introduction:** The Introduction describes the purpose of CEQA and the EIR, common terminology that is used in an EIR, the public review and the decision-making process, and the format and content of the EIR. The introduction also identifies the lead and responsible agencies, discretionary actions required for the Project, and contact person for the EIR.

**Chapter 2. Project Description:** This chapter describes the objectives to be achieved by the proposed Project. The location and characteristics of the Project are detailed along with a description of the surrounding land uses. Construction and operational aspects of the Project and relevant background information are also included.

**Chapter 3. Environmental Setting and Impacts:** This chapter of the EIR describes the existing environmental conditions—or baseline conditions—in the area that may be affected by construction and operation of the proposed Project. This chapter also includes a discussion of the regulatory framework for each of the environmental resource topics that present regulations, plans, goals, policies, and standards that may be applicable to the proposed Project. The environmental consequences that would result from the development of the proposed Project are assessed. Analyses in this chapter for each resource area consider direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the proposed Project, including short-term effects

during construction and long-term effects during operations. Any recommended measures to reduce or avoid adverse effects are also presented in this chapter.

**Chapter 4. Alternatives:** This chapter describes reasonable alternatives to the proposed Project, including a required No Project Alternative.

**Chapter 5. Other CEQA Considerations:** This chapter describes the long-term implications of the proposed Project, including significant and unavoidable environmental impacts and growth-inducing impacts of the proposed Project as per the requirements of CEQA.

**Chapter 6. Coordination and Consultation:** This chapter details the required permits and approvals for the proposed Project as well as the public outreach efforts. It includes a list of organizations, agencies, and persons consulted, as well as a list of preparers of the EIR.

**Chapter 7. Acronyms:** This chapter lists the acronyms used throughout the EIR.

**Chapter 8. References:** This chapter lists reference materials used to compile the EIR.

**Appendices:** The NOP, technical reports and studies, and other relevant information are included as appendices. The appendices are contained in Volume II of the EIR.

## 1.5 AUTHORIZATIONS, PERMITS AND APPROVALS

The LADWP Board has the primary governmental authority for the approval of the proposed Project. As such, LADWP is the lead agency responsible for preparation of the EIR to assess and disclose the environmental consequences associated with Project implementation. Additional discretionary actions will also be required and are listed in Table 1-3 below.

The proposed Project is located in the communities of Brentwood and Pacific Palisades within the City of Los Angeles; a portion is also located within the City of Santa Monica. The electrode cables would be directionally drilled under Will Rogers State Beach, which is under jurisdiction of the California Department of Parks and Recreation and managed by the County of Los Angeles Department of Beaches and Harbor. In addition, construction and operation of the marine portion of the Project is subject to the jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission; California State Lands Commission; Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (which also has jurisdiction over land-side portions of the Project); and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Table 1-3 below provides a list of the anticipated federal, State, and local permits and approvals that would be required for the proposed Project, and the agencies that are anticipated to rely on the EIR. Other relevant laws, regulations, plans, and policies applicable to the proposed Project are summarized in the resource- and issue-specific sections in Chapter 3.

**TABLE 1-3 AUTHORIZATIONS, PERMITS, AND APPROVALS**

ACCEPTING AUTHORITY/ APPROVING AGENCY	PERMIT/APPROVAL	TRIGGERING ACTION	STATUTORY REFERENCE
<b>Federal</b>			
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Department of the Army Permit	Discharge of dredge or fill materials into Waters of the United States	Federal Clean Water Act, Section 404 and Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, Section 10
<b>State of California</b>			
State Lands Commission	Application to Amend Existing Lease/New Lease Agreement	Proposed construction, operation, and maintenance of facilities on submerged lands within Santa Monica Bay	California Public Resources Code Section 6301
California Coastal Commission	Coastal Development Permit	Proposed development (project facilities) within the Coastal Zone	California Coastal Act of 1976
California Department of Parks and Recreation/ Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors	Easement/Consent	Proposed construction and operation under Will Rogers State Beach	California Public Resources Code Section 5012
California Department of Transportation	Encroachment Permit	Proposed construction, operation, and maintenance may occur across or within California highway rights-of-way (Pacific Coast Highway)	California Vehicle Code, Division 1, Chapter 3; Division 2, Chapters 2.5 and 5.5; Division 6; Chapter 7; Division 13; Chapter 5; Division 14.1; Chapters 1 and 2; Divisions 14.8 and 15
California Department of Transportation;	Permit to Directional Drill	Proposed directional drilling under a California highway (Pacific Coast Highway)	N/A
State Water Resources Control Board – Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board	Water Quality Certification	Application for a federal permit (Department of the Army Permit) that may result in discharge into jurisdictional waters	Federal Clean Water Act, Section 401
State Water Resources Control Board – Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board	General Discharge Permits for Stormwater Associated with Construction Activity, National Pollutant Discharge Eliminations System Stormwater Permit	Proposed construction may involve stormwater discharges to surface waters of the State	Federal Clean Water Act, Section 402
<b>City of Los Angeles</b>			
City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering	Excavation "U" Permit	Proposed trenching and excavation within a local roadway	N/A
City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works	Permit for jack and bore operations under storm water channels	Proposed jack and bore operations will cross under existing storm water channels	N/A
City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation	Traffic Control Plan Approval	Proposed work in city streets	N/A
<b>City of Santa Monica</b>			
City of Santa Monica Public Works	Excavation permit	Proposed installation of a facility in the public right-of-way	N/A

ACCEPTING AUTHORITY/ APPROVING AGENCY	PERMIT/APPROVAL	TRIGGERING ACTION	STATUTORY REFERENCE
<b>Other</b>			
Various Local Jurisdictions	Oversized load permit authorizations	Transport of oversized roads on public streets	N/A

## 1.6 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

Section 15150 of the CEQA Guidelines encourages incorporation by reference to reduce the size of an environmental report. Listed below are the documents incorporated by reference into this Draft EIR, along with a brief description of the scope and content of these documents.

### **City of Los Angeles General Plan**

The City of Los Angeles Citywide General Plan is a comprehensive, long-range declaration of policies and programs for the development of the City of Los Angeles. The General Plan is a dynamic document consisting of the following elements: nine city-wide elements (Framework, Air Quality, Conservation, Housing, Noise, Open Space, Service Systems, Safety, and Transportation), and a land use element or plan for each of the City’s 35 Community Planning Areas. The proposed Project area falls within the Brentwood – Pacific Palisades community plan.

### **City of Santa Monica General Plan**

The City of Santa Monica General Plan is a set of policies and programs for the development of the City of Santa Monica. The General Plan consists of the following elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise and Safety, and Historic Preservation.

## 1.7 CONTACT PERSON

The primary contact person for this Draft EIR is Nadia Parker. Ms. Parker can be reached at:

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