

## 4.12 TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

### 4.12.1 Proposed Project

#### 4.12.1.1 Affected Environment

There are two main transportation corridors—United States Interstate 15 (I-15) and State Route (SR) 247—within the Proposed Project area. I-15 roughly parallels Segments 1 and 2 at a distance that ranges from approximately 190 feet to approximately 6 miles and SR 247 is the eastern terminus of Segment 3. Both of these highways are maintained by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Table 4.12-1: Freeways in the Proposed Project Area summarizes traffic data for I-15 and SR 247. Additionally, along Segment 3, the Proposed Project route occurs within Stoddard Wells Road, an unpaved roadway that is considered to be an important arterial corridor, for approximately 15.5 miles. This roadway is maintained by the San Bernardino County Public Works Department.

The Proposed Project area also contains a network of unpaved access roads maintained by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), as well as unpaved access roads owned and maintained by various utility providers for existing electric transmission lines, underground pipelines, and underground fiber optic cable lines in the vicinity.

**Table 4.12-1: Freeways in the Proposed Project Area**

Proposed Project Segment	Freeway	Interchange/Location	Average Daily Traffic Volume (2007)
1	I-15	Nevada/California State Line	40,000
1	I-15	Yates Well Road	40,000
1	I-15	Nipton Road	39,500
2	I-15	Cima Road	39,000
2	I-15	Halloran Summit Road	39,500
3	I-15	Stoddard Wells Road	61,000
3	SR 247	Lucerne Valley Cutoff Road	1,990

Source: Caltrans Traffic Data Branch, 2008

The San Bernardino County Department of Public Works maintains paved and unpaved roadways in the county's unincorporated areas. The San Bernardino County General Plan requires all major arterials within the Proposed Project area to operate at a minimum of Level of Service<sup>1</sup> (LOS) C.

Segment 3 of the Proposed Project is adjacent to Osborne Airport, which is a small, private-use airport located north of I-15. No other airports are located within 2 miles of the Proposed Project.

Parking on highways is prohibited and parking on roadways is generally not conducted due to the rural nature of the area and size of the roads. The only formally designated parking areas in the vicinity of the Proposed Project are located on land managed by the BLM and are associated with public recreational uses (i.e., off-road vehicle areas).

<sup>1</sup> LOS is based on traffic congestion, which is measured by dividing traffic volume by roadway capacity. The resulting number, known as the volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratio, usually ranges from 0 to 1.0. The V/C ratings are divided into six LOS categories, A through F, representing conditions ranging from unrestricted traffic flow (A) to extreme traffic congestion (F).

The nearest public transit provider is the Victor Valley Transit Authority, which provides bus service to the cities of Adelanto, Hesperia, and Victorville; the Town of Apple Valley; and the unincorporated communities of Phelan, Wrightwood, Pinon Hills, and Helendale.

#### **4.12.1.2 Significance Criteria**

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), impacts to utilities and would be considered significant if the Proposed Project:

- causes an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to existing traffic load capacity of the street system;
- results in the exceedance of an established LOS standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways;
- causes a change in air traffic patterns;
- results in a substantial increase in hazards due to design features or incompatible uses;
- results in inadequate emergency access;
- results in inadequate parking capacity; or
- conflicts with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation.

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), consideration of a significant impact on the human environment is conducted in accordance with Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations 1508.27 (specified in Section 1.2.1 Relationship to NEPA Guidelines). Following the public comment period, a finding regarding a significant impact would be prepared in accordance with this provision.

#### **4.12.1.3 Impacts and Mitigation**

During construction, Proposed Project equipment, including water trucks, backhoes, trenchers, plows, and trackhoes, would be mobilized to each of the three segments at the start of construction. All of this equipment would then be stored on site for the duration of construction and used as construction progresses along each segment. As a result, impacts to traffic from mobilizing construction equipment would be extremely short-term and dispersed throughout the Proposed Project alignment.

Daily increases to traffic volumes would primarily result from project personnel commuting to and from the work site. Based on the number of construction personnel anticipated for the Proposed Project, this volume increase would be a maximum of approximately 10 to 12 vehicles per segment. For all three segments, this would increase traffic volumes by approximately 30 to 36 vehicles. The traffic volume increase would primarily occur from construction crews commuting to and from the Proposed Project site. In addition, approximately 50 percent of construction crewmembers on Segment 1 (approximately 5 vehicles) are anticipated to travel to and from Primm, Nevada, during lunch hours. As compared to the average daily traffic volumes provided in Table 4.12-1: Freeways in the Proposed Project Area, these traffic volume increases represent a relatively negligible traffic volume increase for the I-15 and SR 247 and impacts would be short-term, temporary, and dispersed throughout the length of the Proposed Project route. The traffic volume increase would be more notable on unpaved BLM access roads, which may be used by the public to access recreational areas. However, this increase would be temporary (a maximum of one month) and still represent a low volume of traffic in this rural area. Construction vehicles would also increase traffic volumes on unpaved utility access roads. However, these access roads are generally used on an infrequent basis for operation, maintenance, and/or inspection activities for existing utility rights-of-way. Therefore, the increased traffic would not create any significant traffic delays along these roadways. Operations and maintenance of the Proposed Project would not result in any changes to existing traffic conditions. As a result, impacts to traffic flows would be less than significant.

Construction of the Proposed Project would require the closure of roadways that are particularly narrow or have limited access. Specifically, the three following roadways would be closed during construction:

- The unpaved access road along Segment 1 from Yates Well Road south to Nipton Road (approximately 4.9 miles):
- The unpaved utility access road along Segment 2 from Cima Road west to Halloran Summit Road (approximately 5.9 miles): and
- The unpaved utility access road along Segment 3 from the Slash X Regeneration Station, approximately 1 mile southwest of SR 247, to Stoddard Wells Road (approximately 4.4 miles).

Road closures would be short-term and would be a maximum of 2 weeks. Additionally, these roads typically experience minimal use; therefore, closure of these roadways would not significantly impact traffic levels. To ensure that potential impacts caused by road closures and road work during construction is minimized to the maximum extent practicable, the Project applicant proposes to post traffic detour signs and/or personnel to direct traffic during the staged construction period. In addition, should the Proposed Project be approved, the Project applicant would be required to implement the following mitigation measure to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level:

- MM-TRA-01: All property owners and residents on streets where construction would occur shall be notified at least 2 weeks in advance of the start of construction on their street. Advance public notification shall include postings of notices, informational mailers, and appropriate signage.

Portions of the Proposed Project in which new fiber optic cable would be pulled into existing conduit may require temporary lane closures during construction. Lane closures are anticipated to be minor and short term. All work would be conducted in accordance with encroachment permits issued for the Proposed Project. As a result, impacts to traffic in these areas would be less than significant.

In addition, the Project applicant would adhere to the requirements for temporary lane and/or road closures by San Bernardino County and would also submit a Traffic Management Plan, which is subject to the County's review and approval. Implementation of the aforementioned measures would ensure that impacts to traffic flows and residents would be less than significant. Furthermore, such minor increases to traffic would not result in the exceedance of the San Bernardino County LOS standard.

As previously discussed, construction of the Proposed Project would involve road closures, which may impede emergency access. In the unlikely event of an emergency requiring the dispatch of emergency services to residences or other locations along roadways closed for construction, these roadways would be open for unimpeded emergency access. As a result, impacts to emergency access would be less than significant. Once construction has been completed, closed roads would be reopened and returned to preconstruction conditions. Operations and maintenance of the Proposed Project would then be conducted as it had been prior to construction.

Although Segment 3 of the Proposed Project is located adjacent to Osborne Airport, no impacts to air traffic would result because construction would not involve the use of helicopters or any other equipment that may interfere with air traffic patterns. Additionally, the only permanent aboveground modifications would be an increase in the number of marker poles, which would be 8 feet to 16 feet tall. This height is not tall enough to impact air traffic and, as a result, there would be no impacts to air traffic patterns.

Because the Proposed Project involves the replacement of existing underground fiber optic cable segments and does not involve the construction of any new roadways, there would be no activities that would result in increased hazards due to design features or incompatible uses during construction or operations and maintenance.

As previously stated, the only formally designated parking areas in the vicinity of the Proposed Project are located on land managed by the BLM and are associated with public recreational uses (i.e., off-road vehicle areas), although the Proposed Project may temporarily use some of these parking areas as

laydown yards during construction, resulting in the restriction of parking capacities in these areas. Because these impacts would be short-term (a maximum of 1 week) and there is an abundant amount of alternative parking locations for recreational uses in the area, impacts to parking would be less than significant.

Although there would be three road closures associated with the Proposed Project, these roads are not part of any alternative transit program; therefore, construction would have no impact on alternative transit methods. Additionally, the Proposed Project would be installed underground and would not involve the rerouting of any roadways. As a result, operation of the Proposed Project would have no impact on alternative transit methods.

#### **4.12.2 No Action Alternative**

Selection of the No Action Alternative, as described in Section 2.5.1 No Action Alternative, would not result in construction of the Proposed Project and potential effects associated with transportation as described in Section 4.12.1.3 Impacts and Mitigation would not occur.