# Notice of Preparation

Of a Joint Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement

Including

# Notice of Public Scoping Meetings/Request for Comments

On the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement

For the

# TANC Transmission Project

**February 27, 2009**

## To: All Interested Parties

## A. Introduction

The Transmission Agency of Northern California (TANC)[1], a California joint exercise of powers agency organized under the provisions of Chapter 5, Division 7, Title 1 of the Government Code of the State of California, and a Joint Powers Agreement dated as of December 10, 1984, and Western Area Power Administration (Western), an agency of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), intend to prepare a joint Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) referred to as an EIR/EIS for the TANC Transmission Project (TTP). TANC is the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lead agency and Western is the federal lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). TANC and Western will prepare the Draft and Final EIR/EIS to comply with both CEQA and NEPA.

The TTP would include building and upgrading about 600 miles of 230 kilovolt (kV) and 500 kV transmission lines, substations, and related facilities. It would consist of five segments of transmission line corridor that extend from northeastern California through the Central Valley and split westward to the San Francisco Bay area and eastward to the Sierra Foothills. The proposed corridors have been identified to avoid, to the extent possible, residential and known environmentally-sensitive areas, and to take advantage of accessible competitive renewable energy zones, as recommended by the State of California's Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative.

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR/EIS provides a brief description of the proposed TTP, a summary of potential project impacts, the times and locations of public scoping meetings, information on how to provide comments, and instructions for obtaining additional project information. On January 7, 2009, Western issued an Advance Notice of Intent (ANOI) pursuant to 10 Code of Federal Regulations 1021.311(b) to inform the public and interested parties about the TTP. On February 23, 2009, Western published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a joint EIR/EIS for the TTP in the Federal Register. TANC and Western will jointly conduct a public scoping process, during which public comments will be received on the scope of the EIR/EIS, the proposed action, alternatives, and other issues to be addressed in the EIR/EIS.

[1] The members of TANC are the City of Alameda, the City of Biggs, the City of Gridley, the City of Healdsburg, the City of Lodi, the City of Lompoc, the Modesto Irrigation District, the City of Palo Alto, the City of Redding, the City of Roseville, the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, the City of Santa Clara, the Turlock Irrigation District, and the City of Ukiah. Additionally, the Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative is an associate member.

# B. Project Description and Location

TANC and Western propose to coordinate development of the TTP, which would include building and upgrading 230-kV and 500-kV transmission lines, substations, and related facilities. The TTP would be designed to provide new access to renewable energy resources in northern California, northwestern Nevada, and the Pacific Northwest; enhance the California-Oregon Intertie; reduce existing congestion and system losses; increase the load-carrying capability and reliability of northern California's transmission system; improve the reliability of Western's existing Balancing Authority Area; and relieve existing electrical transmission system constraints in northern California. Specifically, the proposed TTP is intended to:

- Reduce operating constraints on TANC's 500-kV California-Oregon Transmission Project (COTP) and the existing California-Oregon Intertie by providing additional 500-kV transmission resources that can be used to help avoid Intertie load curtailments and related congestion;
- Provide electrical system redundancy to TANC members in a manner capable of providing the most cost effective electric service to its ratepayers;
- Improve the reliability of the participating municipal control areas by providing additional transmission pathways and access to additional generation resources, therefore improving operational flexibility between generation resources and members load centers;
- Increase and improve the member-owned and operated, cost-effective transmission capability into northern California (from the Northwest) and into the Sacramento metro and San Francisco Bay areas; and
- Reduce the costs of generation market entry, and therefore increase the cost-effectiveness of electricity delivered to the TANC members' service areas.

The proposed TTP would consist of five segments of transmission line corridors that extend from northeastern California through the Central Valley and split westward to the San Francisco Bay area and eastward to the Sierra Foothills. The proposed corridors have been identified to avoid, to the extent possible, residential and known environmentally-sensitive areas, and take advantage of accessible competitive renewable energy zones, as recommended by the State of California's Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative. The proposed segments are further identified as: North Segment, Central Segment, West Segment, East Segment, and Sierra Foothills Segment. A description of each segment is provided below and a map of the proposed project area is also included.

**North Segment.** The North Segment would include two, new, single-circuit, 500-kV transmission lines, each extending west from a proposed new substation near Ravendale to a proposed new substation near the Pacific Gas & Electric Company's (PG&E) existing Round Mountain Substation. Three corridor alternatives, each 80 to 100 miles long, have been preliminarily identified. These three corridor alternatives would generally be located north of Eagle Lake and State Route (SR) 44; and near SR 299. The North Segment would also include a new, 1-mile, double-circuit, 500-kV transmission line to interconnect the proposed new substation near Round Mountain to PG&E's existing Round Mountain Substation. The North Segment would then continue with a new, double-circuit, 500-kV transmission line that would extend 40 to 45 miles southwest to the COTP's existing Olinda Substation, south of the City of Redding. Three corridor alternatives have been preliminarily identified for this segment.

**Central Segment.** The Central Segment would begin at the Olinda Substation and extend south to Tracy. It would include a new, double-circuit, 500-kV transmission line through the Central Valley; interconnect to a new substation in southern Sacramento County and continue on to a new substation near the COTP's existing Tracy Substation. Three alternative corridors have been preliminarily identified for the Central Segment: the western, central, and eastern alternatives.

The 172-mile western corridor alternative of the Central Segment would lie along the western side of the Sacramento Valley. This alternative would be roughly parallel to and 5 to 20 miles west of the Interstate 5 corridor. It would pass just east of Black Butte Lake and west of the cities of Orland, Willows, and Williams. South of Winters, the western alternative would turn east and cross between the cities of Dixon and Vacaville before continuing east for approximately 35 miles to a proposed new substation in southern Sacramento County, west of SR 99 and south of Elk Grove.

The 167-mile central corridor alternative runs roughly parallel to and 5 to 10 miles west of SR 99 through the Sacramento Valley, just west of the cities of Red Bluff and Chico, then between the Sutter Buttes and Yuba City, and east of the cities of Woodland and Davis. The central alternative would then turn southeast, converging with the western alternative, and interconnect at the proposed new substation in southern Sacramento County.

The 173-mile eastern corridor alternative would be located west of the Sierra Foothills of the Sacramento Valley, roughly parallel to and 5 to 10 miles east of SR 99. This alignment would pass east of the cities of Red Bluff and Chico, through Oroville and east of Yuba City. This proposed alternative would then shift approximately 15 miles to the west and continue southward, west of the Sacramento Airport and West Sacramento to the proposed substation in southern Sacramento County.

From the proposed new substation in southern Sacramento County, each of three alternative corridors would continue 40 to 45 miles southwest to a proposed new substation near the COTP's existing Tracy Substation.

**West Segment.** The West Segment would include two, double-circuit, 230-kV transmission lines from the Tracy area to the South San Francisco Bay area. The first would include upgrading the existing transmission line from the new substation near Tracy to Silicon Valley Power's existing Kifer Receiving Station (KRS) in Santa Clara. Construction of this transmission line would include upgrading about 13 miles of existing, double-circuit, 230-kV transmission line from the proposed substation near Tracy to Western's Livermore Substation, and building 30 to 40 miles of new, double-circuit, 230-kV transmission line from the Livermore Substation to the proposed substation near the KRS Substation. Up to 7 miles of this segment may be built underground. From the new substation near KRS, an approximately 500-foot, 115-kV transmission tie would be built to KRS. Two alternative corridors have been preliminarily identified for this transmission line. The second double-circuit, 230-kV transmission line would follow a southwesterly path from PG&E's existing Tesla Substation to just south of Livermore and through the cities of Fremont and Newark to PG&E's existing Newark Substation.

**East Segment.** This segment would include building 40 to 45 miles of new, double-circuit, 500-kV transmission line east from the new substation near Tracy, roughly paralleling Interstate 205 and SR 120, to a proposed substation located south of the Oakdale Airport. Two corridor alternatives have been preliminarily identified for the proposed 500-kV transmission line, both of which would run north of the cities of Tracy and Modesto and south of the cities of Manteca, Escalon, and Oakdale. From the new substation near the Oakdale Airport, the East Segment would split into two alignments: a 7 to 11 mile, double-circuit, 230-kV transmission line would run southwest to the Modesto Irrigation District's existing Parker Substation in Modesto; and a 15 to 22 mile, double-circuit, 230-kV line would run south to a proposed new substation located just east of Turlock. Three corridor alternatives have been preliminarily identified for each of the two, proposed, 230-kV transmission lines.

**Sierra Foothills Segment.** The Sierra Foothills Segment would include a new, double-circuit, 230-kV transmission line, approximately 28 miles long. It would originate at the proposed substation near the Oakdale Airport and extend northeast, generally along SR 108, through the Sierra Foothills to Western's existing substation at the New Melones Dam. Alternative corridors for this segment have not been identified at this time.

## C. Potential Environmental Effects

The EIR/EIS will discuss the potential environmental effects of the proposed TTP, and will provide mitigation measures that could minimize any potential significant adverse effects. It will also discuss the potentially significant environmental impacts of the alternatives to the transmission line routes and the proposed mitigation to reduce those impacts.

Based on preliminary analysis, completion of the proposed TTP may have a number of potentially significant environmental effects. Potential issues and impacts to the existing environment include, but are not limited to, those listed in Attachment 1. No determinations have been made as to the significance of these potential impacts. Such determinations will be made in the EIR/EIS after the issues are thoroughly analyzed. In addition to the analysis of the issues listed in Attachment 1 and other issues raised in the scoping process, the EIR/EIS will discuss the cumulative impacts of the proposed TTP in combination with other present and planned projects in the area.

## D. Public Scoping

According to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(d), the lead agency for a project may forego the detailed initial review of a project and begin work on the preparation of an EIR if the lead agency is able to determine that an EIR would clearly be required for the project. Because of the large-scale nature of the TTP and its potential impacts on the environment, an Initial Study was not prepared and TANC, in coordination with Western, will proceed to prepare an EIR/EIS. The EIR/EIS on the proposed TTP will focus on significant environmental effects. A public scoping process will be used to help to identify the range of actions, alternatives, environmental effects, and mitigation measures to be analyzed in depth, and to eliminate from detailed study those issues that are not pertinent to the final decision on the proposed project.

Members of the public, affected federal, state, and local agencies, interest groups, and other interested parties may participate in the scoping process by providing written comments or recommendations concerning the issues to be analyzed in the EIR/EIS.

## E. Public Scoping Meetings

Twelve open-house public scoping meetings will be held between March 26 and April 15, 2009. The purpose of the scoping meetings is to provide information about the proposed TTP, review project maps, answer questions, and take written comments from interested parties. The scoping meetings will not be used to resolve differences concerning the merits of the project or to anticipate the ultimate decision on the proposed project.

The dates and locations for the public scoping meetings are provided in the table below. Each meeting is scheduled to begin at 5:30 p.m. with an open-house format during which attendees are invited to speak one-on-one with TTP representatives and cooperating agencies' staff. At approximately 6:30 p.m., a presentation will be given by TTP representatives, after which, the open-house format will resume. Attendees are welcome to come and go at their convenience throughout the meeting.

All meeting locations will be wheelchair accessible. Please call (916) 353-4777 if you are in need of additional accommodations.

## Public Scoping Meetings

| Date | Location/Address |
|---|---|
| March 26, 2009 | City of Sacramento<br>Radisson Hotel<br>500 Leisure Lane<br>Sacramento, CA 95815 |
| March 30, 2009 | City of Alturas<br>Sacred Heart Catholic Church Hall<br>507 East 4th Street<br>Alturas, CA 96101 |
| March 31, 2009 | City of Burney<br>Burney Lions Club<br>37006 Main Street<br>Burney, CA 96013 |
| April 1, 2009 | City of Santa Clara<br>Hyatt Regency Santa Clara<br>5101 Great America Parkway<br>Santa Clara, CA 95054 |
| April 2, 2009 | City of Turlock<br>On Broadway<br>153 South Broadway<br>Turlock, CA 95380 |
| April 6, 2009 | City of Chico<br>Chico Family Masonic Center<br>1110 West East Avenue<br>Chico, CA 95926 |
| April 7, 2009 | City of Susanville<br>Jensen Hall at Lassen County Fairgrounds<br>195 Russell Avenue<br>Susanville, CA 96130 |
| April 8, 2009 | City of Modesto<br>Clarion Inn<br>1612 Sisk Road<br>Modesto, CA 95350 |
| April 9, 2009 | City of Tracy<br>Platinum Conference Center at the Opera House<br>902 Central Avenue<br>Tracy, CA 95376 |
| April 13, 2009 | City of Redding<br>Red Lion Hotel<br>1830 Hilltop Drive<br>Redding, CA 96002 |
| April 14, 2009 | City of Williams<br>Granzella's Inn<br>391 6th Street<br>Williams, CA 95987 |
| April 15, 2009 | City of Stockton<br>Lexington Plaza Waterfront Hotel<br>110 Fremont Street<br>Stockton, CA 95202 |

# F. Scoping Comments

At this time, TANC and Western are soliciting comments regarding any issues and alternatives that should be considered in the preparation of the EIR/EIS. Suggestions for submitting scoping comments are presented at the end of this section. Written comments must be postmarked by no later than **April 30, 2009.** All written comments may be submitted in a variety of ways: (1) by mail, (2) by electronic mail (email), (3) by fax, or (4) by attending a Public Scoping Meeting (see times and locations above) and/or by providing a written comment at the meeting. Instructions for each comment submission type are provided below.

**By Mail:** If you send comments by mail, please use first-class mail and be sure to include your name and return address (please write legibly). Please send written comments on the scope of the TTP EIR/EIS to:

**Mr. David Young**
**NEPA Document Manager**
**Western Area Power Administration**
**Sierra Nevada Region**
**114 Parkshore Drive**
**Folsom, CA 95630**
**(916) 353-4777**

**By Electronic Mail:** E-mail communications are welcome; however, please remember to include your name and return address in the email message. Email messages should be sent to **TTPEIS@wapa.gov**.

**By Fax**: You may fax your comments to **(916) 353-4772**. Please remember to include your name and return address in the fax.

**Suggestions for Effective Participation in Scoping**: Following are some suggestions for preparing and providing the most useful information for the proposed TTP EIR/EIS scoping process.

1. Review the description of the TTP.
2. Review the Summary of Potential Issues and Impacts (Attachment 1).
3. Attend the scoping meetings.
4. Submit written comments.
5. Suggest mitigation measures.
6. Suggest alternatives.

# G. Agency Comments

We are seeking comments from all responsible agencies, trustee agencies and all other public agencies with jurisdiction by law with respect to the project as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR/EIS. Agency responses should identify the issues to be considered in the EIR/EIS, including significant environmental issues, alternatives, mitigation measures, and whether the responding agency will be a responsible or trustee agency, and the basis for that determination. Due to the time limits mandated by state and federal laws, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but must be postmarked by no later than **April 30, 2009**. Please send your comments to:

**Mr. David Young**
**NEPA Document Manager**
**Western Area Power Administration**
**Sierra Nevada Region**
**114 Parkshore Drive**
**Folsom, CA 95630**
**(916) 353-4777**

# H. Additional Project Information

**Internet Website:** Information about the environmental review process will be posted on the Internet at: www.wapa.gov/transmission/ttp.htm. This site will be used to post all public documents during the environmental review process and to announce upcoming public meetings. Additional project information will be posted at the TANC website: www.tanc.us.

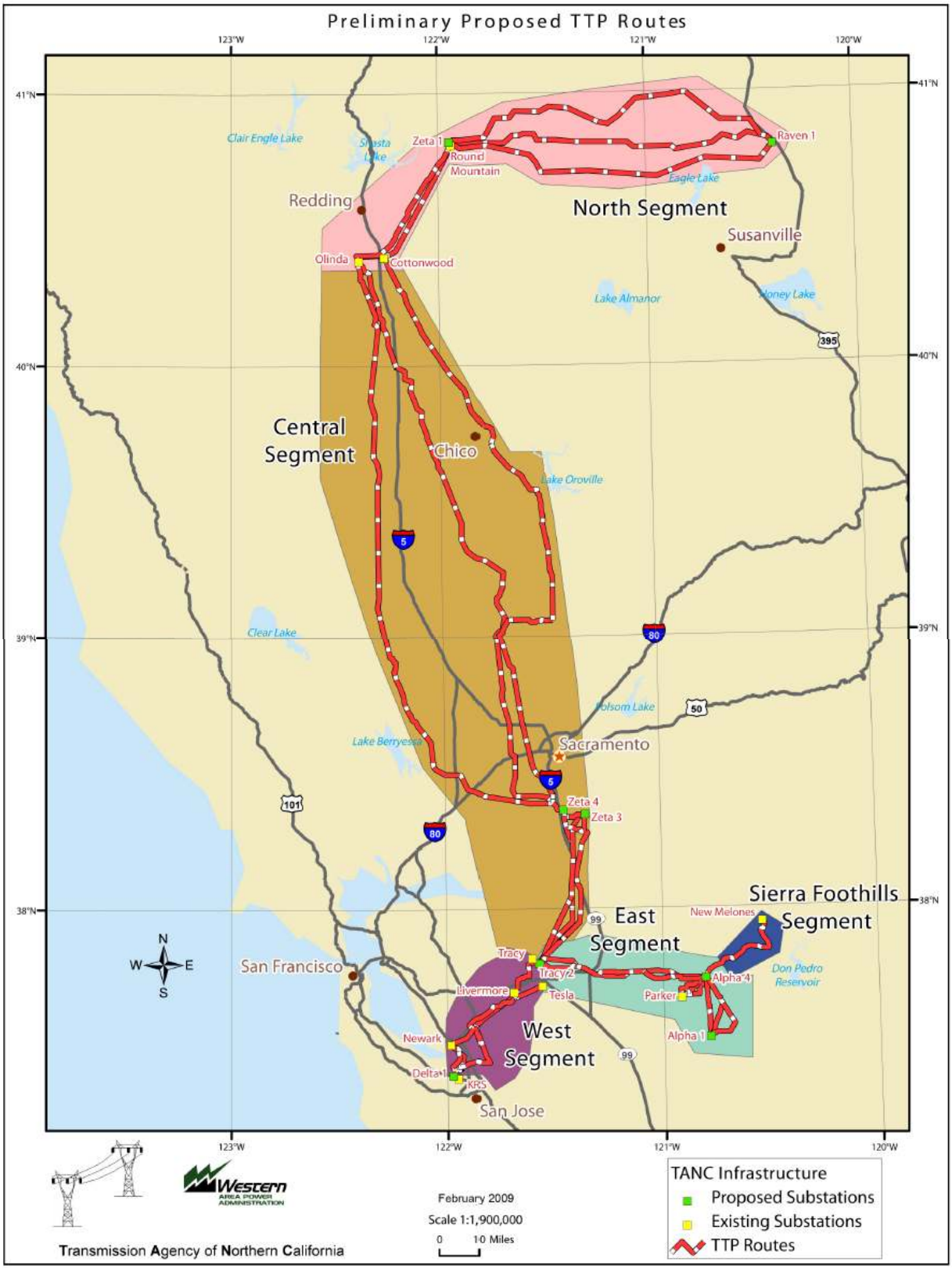
**Project Information Hotline**. You may request information by leaving a voice message at (916) 353-4777.

# ATTACHMENT 1

## Summary of Potential Issues or Impacts: TANC Transmission Project

| Environmental Issue Area | Potential Issues or Impacts |
|---|---|
| **Aesthetics / Visual** | • Visual contrast, increased industrial character, view blockage, and skylining resulting from placement of structures in all project segments.<br>• Impacts to sensitive viewpoints from which the TTP would be visible, including but not limited to: residences, park and recreation areas, scenic roadways, public lands, and open space areas. |
| **Agricultural Resources** | • Impacts during the construction phase resulting from the removal of cropland from production, interference with tilling and irrigation patterns, and/or potential conflict with agricultural aviators (crop dusters) due to temporary laydown areas, tensioning, and pulling sites.<br>• Impacts on zoning for agricultural use, Williamson Act contracts, or conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use.<br>• Long-term operational impacts where transmission line structure foundations would permanently remove active agricultural land out of production and interfere with tilling and irrigation patterns. |
| **Air Quality** | • Impacts during construction when heavy equipment, support vehicles, and internal combustion equipment create fugitive dust and/or generate exhaust containing: carbon monoxide (CO), reactive organic compounds (ROC), nitrogen oxide (NOx), sulfur oxides (SOx), and particulate matter (PM10).<br>• Ongoing impacts from emissions and fugitive dust produced during operation and maintenance activities.<br>• Temporary and long-term impacts from toxic air contaminants that may have localized effects.<br>• Impacts resulting from violation of the Federal Air Quality Conformity Rule in nonattainment areas for one or more air pollutants.<br>• Impacts to human and environmental health from non-attainment of the EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).<br>• Impacts resulting from violations to any areas designated as non-attainment for particulate matter or any other pollutant based on California Air Resources Board (CARB) or local Air Quality Management District (AQMD) Standards. |
| **Biological Resources** | • Temporary and permanent loss of native habitat, including habitat for special-status species<br>• Disruption in wildlife behavior (e.g., breeding, foraging, roosting, nesting, etc.).<br>• Bird electrocution and collision resulting from contact with overhead transmission lines.<br>• Direct, permanent impacts to wildlife and plants during construction, operations, and maintenance activities. |
| **Cultural Resources** | • Impacts to known and unknown prehistoric and historic resources and archaeological sites, which may be determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historical Places (NRHP).<br>• Impacts to Traditional Culture Properties (TCPs) or potential TCPs. |
| **Electric and Magnetic Fields** | • Public concern about electric and magnetic field effects of the transmission line. |
| **Geology and Soils** | • Damage to uncoated steel from highly corrosive soils.<br>• Sedimentation of water features from soil erosion caused by construction and operation activities.<br>• Impacts from landslides, mudslides, surface rupture, or other ground failure from seismic activity, particularly where project features are near active faults.<br>• Impacts from soil volume changes or soil compaction due to changes in soil moisture content and project activities. |
| **Hazards and Hazardous Materials** | • Impacts from improper storage or handling or hazardous materials and/or hazardous wastes during construction, operations, or maintenance activities. |

| Environmental Issue Area | Potential Issues or Impacts |
|---|---|
| | • Impacts from leaking or spilling of petroleum or hydraulic fluids from construction equipment or other vehicles during construction, operation, or maintenance activities.<br>• Impacts from the inadvertent uncovering of hazardous materials during excavation activities, causing toxic releases to the environment.<br>• Construction vehicles would require on-site refueling, and may require routine or emergency maintenance that could result in the release of oil, diesel fuel, transmission fluid or other materials.<br>• Fire hazards during construction by workers and equipment use, and during TTP operation through the contact of transmission line with vegetation. |
| **Hydrology and Water Quality** | • Impacts from increased surface water runoff, erosion, siltation, and sedimentation.<br>• Impacts to streams or washes from violation of water quality standards or waste discharge requirements.<br>• Impacts to groundwater recharge resulting from creation of impermeable surfaces.<br>• Hydrological impacts to creeks and rivers and flood control channels. |
| **Land Use and Recreation** | • Conflicts with applicable federal, State, and local land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.<br>• Impacts to residential, recreational, commercial, and transportation corridor land uses resulting from disruption, impedance, or removal of existing and planned land uses.<br>• Impacts resulting from reduced access to recreation areas during construction activities. |
| **Noise** | • On-site noise during construction primarily from heavy-duty diesel and gasoline-powered construction equipment.<br>• Off-site noise generated from trucks delivering materials and equipment to the job-sites, as well as from vehicles used by workers commuting to and from the job sites.<br>• Operational noise as a result of corona noise discharge from active electrical lines, noise generated from substation activities, and noise generated from maintenance activities.<br>• On-site groundborne vibration and groundborne noise during construction primarily from heavy-duty diesel and gasoline-powered construction equipment.<br>• Off-site groundborne vibration and groundborne noise generated from trucks delivering materials and equipment to the job-sites.<br>• Impacts from both construction and operational noise activities violating local noise ordinances (volume and hours of operation). |
| **Public Services and Utilities** | • Impacts from increased usage of public resources, services, and utilities.<br>• Impacts to emergency access and response times resulting from construction activities.<br>• Impacts from increased generation of waste and disposal needs. |
| **Socioeconomics** | • Impacts from the employment of construction personnel during construction of the TTP to established and projected population, housing, and employment levels within the project area.<br>• Potential positive fiscal impacts in property-taxing jurisdictions, which would receive tax revenues from the TTP.<br>• Impacts to property values of parcels crossed by or near the TTP.<br>• Disproportionate impacts on low-income and/or minority populations |
| **Transportation and Traffic** | • Temporary disruption of traffic flow, transit services, or rail services during construction activities.<br>• Physical impacts to public roadway rights of way (i.e., lane closures, detours, driveway blockages, loss of parking, and disruptions to traffic, transit, and pedestrian movements in the construction area). |
| **Other Issues** | • Cumulative Impacts (considering other projects that are planned, proposed, or under construction in the project area)<br>• Growth-Inducing Effects |


Preliminary Proposed TTP Routes
123°W
122°W
121°W
120°W
41°N
40°N
39°N
38°N
Clair Engle Lake
Shasta Lake
Zeta 1
Round Mountain
Raven 1
Eagle Lake
Redding
North Segment
Susanville
Olinda
Cottonwood
Lake Almanor
Honey Lake
395
Central Segment
Chico
Lake Oroville
5
Clear Lake
80
Folsom Lake
50
Lake Berryessa
Sacramento
101
Zeta 4
Zeta 3
Sierra Foothills Segment
New Melones
East Segment
99
Tracy
Tracy 2
Alpha 4
Don Pedro Reservoir
San Francisco
Livermore
Tesla
Parker
West Segment
Newark
Alpha 1
Delta 1
KRS
San Jose
N
W
E
S
Western
AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION
February 2009
Scale 1:1,900,000
0
10 Miles
TANC Infrastructure
Proposed Substations
Existing Substations
TTP Routes
Transmission Agency of Northern California