

Corridor 223-224

Junction US-95/Hwy-160 to Northwest Las Vegas

Introduction

Corridor 223-224 (Figures 1 and 2) extends east-west along U.S. Highway 95 to the south of the DNWR and Nellis AFB and north of Red Rock Canyon NCA and the Spring Mountains NRA. The corridor ends at the junction of Corridors 18-224 and 224-225 near Mercury, NV. Federally designated portions of this corridor are entirely on BLM-administered land, with a 3,500-ft width for most of the corridor and a reduced 2,050-ft width between the NTTR and the Red Rock Canyon NCA from MP 6.8 to MP 17.5. Corridor 223-224 is designated as multimodal and can therefore accommodate both electrical transmission and pipeline projects. The corridor spans 47.3 miles, with 39.6 miles designated on BLM-administered lands. The corridor's area is 15,058 acres or 23.5 square miles. The corridor is under the jurisdiction of the BLM Southern Nevada District and the Las Vegas and Pahrump Field Offices in Clark County and southern Nye County, respectively. This corridor is entirely in Region 1.

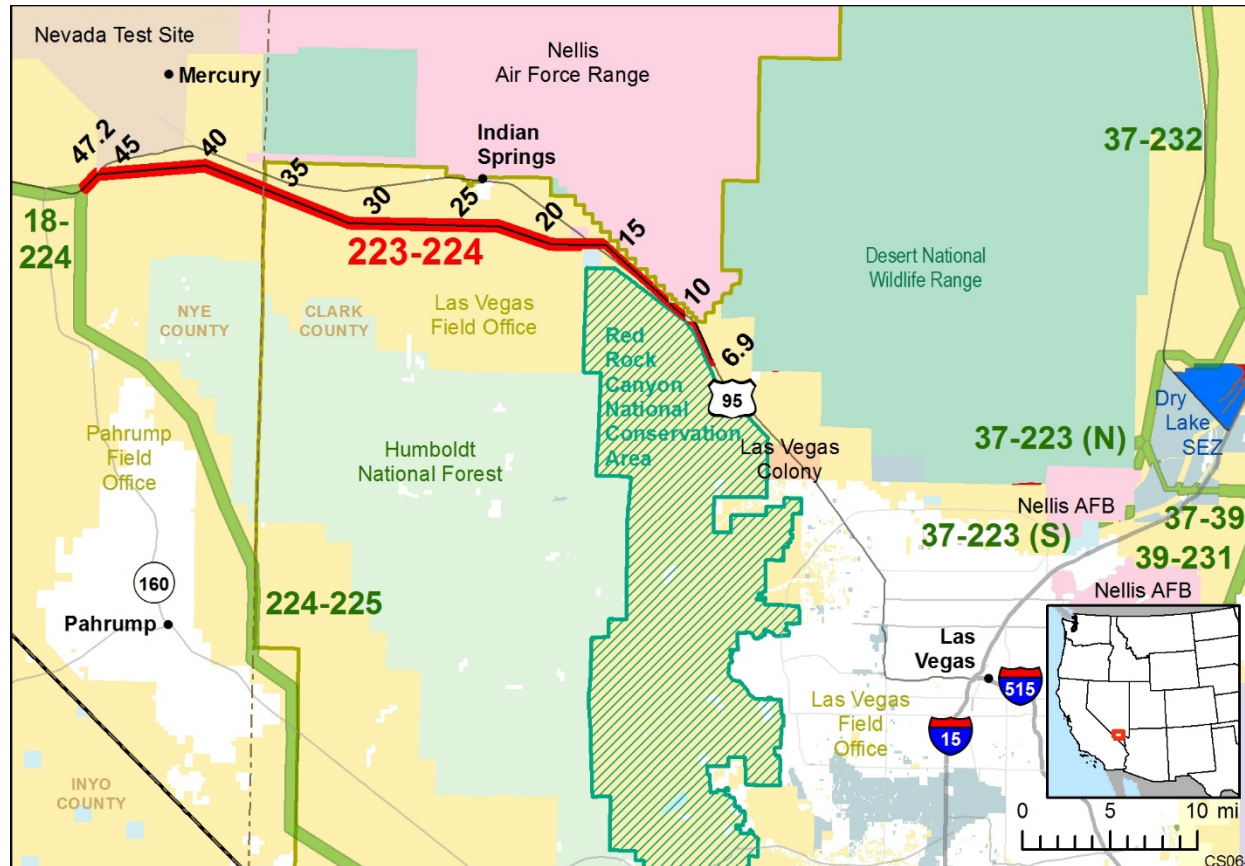
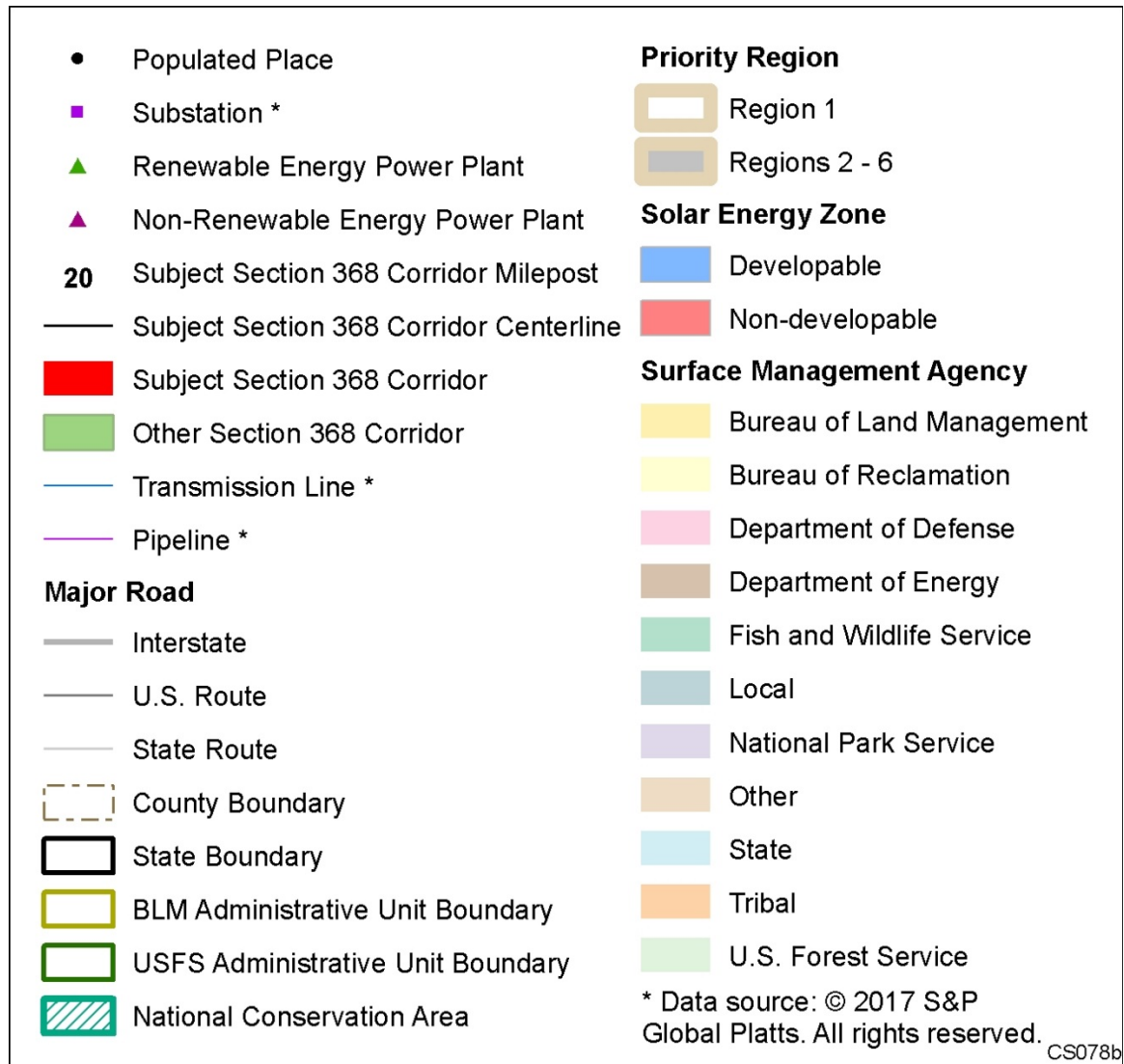


Figure 1. Corridor 223-224



Key

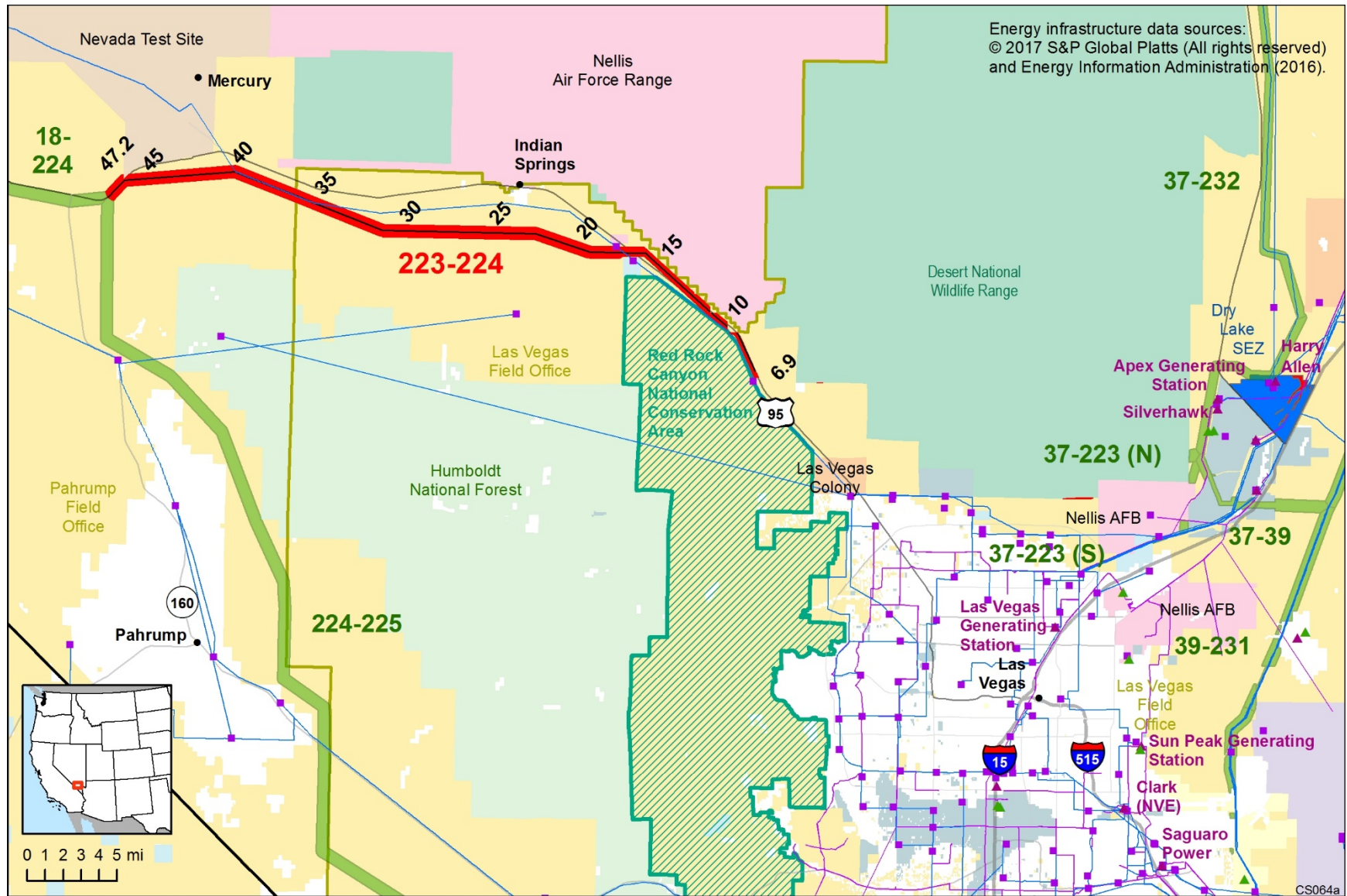


Figure 2. Corridor 223-224, including existing energy infrastructure

Corridor Rationale

During scoping for the WVEC PEIS, routes generally following this corridor were not suggested. The route was added, however, to provide a connection across the northern portion of the Las Vegas area between major north-south routes. The intent was to complete a Section 368 route across the northern portion of Las Vegas in response to anticipated demand for alternate routes in this high-use area (Corridor 223-224 to connect to Corridor 37-232 via Corridors 37-223[N] and/or 37-223[S]). However, because Section 368 corridors were not designated on DoD or USFWS lands as anticipated, the connection is not complete.

Existing Infrastructure: The corridor is occupied by U.S. Highway 95 from MP 6.9 to MP 17.1 and MP 45.5 to MP 47.2 and a VEA transmission line crossing at MP 17.3 and located within the corridor from MP 33.4 to MP 39.9. Several authorized ROWs partially traverse the corridor and include three 138-kV transmission lines; 69-kV, 12.5-kV, 7.2-kV, and 4-kV power distribution lines; a 12-kV underground distribution line; as well as telephone and fiber-optic communication lines.

Potential Future Development: Several ROWs are pending. The eastern portion of the corridor appears to overlap the 400-ft-wide Renewable Energy Transmission Corridor that was established by Congress in 2014 and falls within formerly used defense sites.

Corridor of Concern Status

Corridor 223-224 is a corridor of concern. Concerns regarding ACECs and the DNWR were identified in the Settlement Agreement. These issues are highlighted in yellow in the Corridor Analysis table below.

Corridor Abstract Update

New data have been added to the Section 368 Energy Corridor Mapping Tool, since release of the draft abstracts in September 2016. A GIS view identifying high-, medium-, and low-conflict areas consistent with the screening criteria in 43 CFR 2804.35(a)-(c) has also been added to the mapping tool. A complete description of the mapping tool; a description of the high-, medium-, and low-conflict areas; and a list of the GIS data sources are included in the corridor report for the Region 1 Regional Review.

Additions to the corridor analysis table, based on input from stakeholders and additional Agency analysis, include physical barriers (terrain issues), jurisdictional concerns, environmental justice issues for the communities of Corn Creek and Indian Springs, special status species, military and civilian aviation, specially designated areas (Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument), and visual resources (polarized glare).

Revisions, deletions, or additions to Section 368 energy corridors would be made only during the land-use planning process through a plan amendment for an individual project or a plan revision. However, the Settlement Agreement sets forth a systematic process for the Agencies to review Section 368 energy corridors and provide recommendations for revisions, deletions, or additions to the corridors. There were stakeholder recommendations in the 2014 RFI reroute this corridor to avoid ACECs, the DNWR and TCAs without existing transmission facilities. Suggestions for corridor revisions, deletions, or additions in response to the release of the draft abstracts included rerouting the corridor to follow existing transmission, to follow U.S. Highway 95, to better align with rugged terrain, to avoid Tule Springs National Monument and DNWR, and to avoid corridor gaps. There were also suggestions to expand the corridor and delete the corridor. Based on Agency analysis, as well as input provided by stakeholders, the Agencies recommend a revision to Corridor 223-224 to realign the corridor along a locally designated corridor with existing infrastructure to avoid Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument, NTTR, and other jurisdictional issues that prevent corridor connectivity eastwards toward Corridors 37-223 and 37-232.

Corridor Analysis

The corridor analysis table below identifies affecting Corridor 223-224, the location of the concerns within the corridor, and the results of the analysis of the concerns by the Agencies. Concerns are checked if they are known to apply to the corridor.

Energy Planning Opportunities

- Appropriate and acceptable uses
- WWEC purpose (e.g., renewable energy)
- Transmission and pipeline capacity opportunity

Energy Planning Concerns

- Physical barrier
- Jurisdictional concern
- Corridor alignment and spacing
- Transmission and pipeline capacity concern

Land Management Responsibilities and Environmental Concerns

- Acoustics
- Air quality
- Climate change
- Cultural resources
- Ecological resources
- Environmental justice
- Hydrological resources
- Lands and realty
- Lands with wilderness characteristics

Livestock grazing

- Paleontology
- Public access and recreation
- Socioeconomics
- Soils/erosion
- Specially designated areas
- Tribal concerns
- Visual resources
- Wild horses and burros

Interagency Operating Procedures

REGION 1 – CORRIDOR 223-224 – ANALYSIS TABLE

ID	Agency	Agency Jurisdiction	County	Primary Concern/ Opportunity	Corridor Location (by Milepost [MP])	Source: Context	Agency Review and Analysis
ENERGY PLANNING CONCERNS							
<i>Physical Barrier</i>							
223-224 .new1	BLM	Las Vegas FO	Clark, NV	Terrain concerns	MP 17 to MP 25	Comment on corridor abstract: recommend realigning the corridor east of MP 25 to better align with the rugged terrain.	The Agencies have identified a potential corridor revision to realign the corridor with existing locally designated corridors where there is existing infrastructure.
223-224 .new2	BLM	Pahrump FO	Nye, NV	Possible terrain concerns.	MP 40 to MP 47.2	Comment on corridor abstract: review corridor path. VEA has already constructed facilities through this area and did not follow the corridor because of terrain issues. Recommend that this corridor be realigned to follow existing transmission facilities wherever possible.	The Agencies have identified a potential corridor revision to realign the corridor with existing locally designated corridors where there is existing infrastructure.

REGION 1 – CORRIDOR 223-224 – ANALYSIS TABLE

ID	Agency	Agency Jurisdiction	County	Primary Concern/ Opportunity	Corridor Location (by Milepost [MP])	Source: Context	Agency Review and Analysis
Jurisdictional Concern							
223-224 .001	DOD	Las Vegas FO	Clark, NV	Discontinuous or reduced corridor width	MP 9.2 to MP 12.6	GIS Analysis: discontinuous or reduced width portion of corridor includes 2 acres of DoD-administered land in Nellis Air Force Range that were studied in the WECC PEIS as part of this corridor, but not designated. There were stakeholder suggestions to reroute the corridor to avoid gaps in the designated corridor.	The Agencies recommend revising this corridor to realign the corridor with existing locally designated corridors where there is existing infrastructure because of the multiple jurisdictional concerns.
223-224 .002	FWS	Las Vegas FO	Clark, NV	Undesignated gap	MP 3.2 to MP 4.6, and east of MP 0 to Corridor 37-223	GIS Analysis: an undesignated gap and in the eastern portion of the corridor connecting to Corridor 37-223 includes 7,458 acres of USFWS-administered land in the Desert National Wildlife Range that were studied in the WWEC PEIS as part of this corridor, but not designated. There were stakeholder suggestions to reroute the corridor to avoid gaps in the designated corridor.	The portion of the corridor within the Tule Springs National Monument (MP 0 to MP 6.9) has been removed.
223-224 .new3	DOD	Las Vegas FO	Clark, NV	BLM Jurisdiction	MP 9.3 to MP 17.2	GIS Analysis: a proposed new land acquisition by DOD intersects the corridor.	The Agencies recommend revising this corridor to realign the corridor with existing locally designated corridors where there is existing infrastructure because of the multiple jurisdictional concerns.
223-224 .010	BLM	Las Vegas FO	Clark, NV	Desert National Wildlife Range (DNWR)	MP 2.7 to MP 4.6	RFI: Reroute to avoid concern. Comment on corridor abstract: The corridor crosses the DNWR in an undesignated gap. Evaluate visual impacts.	The portion of the corridor within the Tule Springs National Monument (MP 0 to MP 6.9) has been removed.

REGION 1 – CORRIDOR 223-224 – ANALYSIS TABLE

ID	Agency	Agency Jurisdiction	County	Primary Concern/ Opportunity	Corridor Location (by Milepost [MP])	Source: Context	Agency Review and Analysis
				Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument	MP 0 to MP 9.3	Lands were withdrawn between MP 0 and MP 9.3 for creation of the Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument operated by the National Park Service. There were stakeholder suggestions to reroute the corridor to avoid gaps in the designated corridor.	The portion of the corridor within the Tule Springs National Monument (MP 0 to MP 6.9) has been removed. The Agencies have identified a potential corridor revision to realign the corridor with existing locally designated corridors where there is existing infrastructure because of the multiple jurisdictional concerns. Use of the existing corridor is limited by lands withdrawn to DoD north of U.S. Highway 95 and Red Rock Canyon NCA south of U.S. Highway 95 and by lands withdrawn to the NPS for the Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument and the USFWS DNWR.
LAND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS							
<i>Ecology: Special Status Animal Species</i>							
223-224 .003	BLM	Pahrump and Las Vegas FOs	Nye and Clark, NV	TCAs; Priority 1 and 2 connectivity habitat (least-cost corridor for Desert Tortoise connectivity) (USFWS 2012)	TCAs: Entire corridor; Connectivity habitat: Entire corridor	RFI: reroute or remove to avoid siting new facilities in TCAs without existing transmission, and minimize additional transmission siting in TCAs.	The corridor contains important contiguous Desert Tortoise habitat in the area providing connectivity; however, there are no alternative routes that would avoid TCAs and Priority 1 and 2 connectivity habitat in a corridor with existing transmission. Analysis would be completed through the NEPA process case by case with a full range of alternatives. Impacts on habitat and habitat connectivity may be avoided, minimized, and mitigated through activities identified and implemented in consultation with the USFWS under ESA Section 7.
<i>Environmental Justice</i>							
223-224 .new4	BLM	Las Vegas FO	Clark County, NV	Communities of Corn Creek and Indian Springs	MP 24	Comment on corridor abstract: evaluate the potential effects of Valley Fever on these communities from transmission construction and cumulative	Impacts would be analyzed and mitigated as part of the project-specific environmental review required under NEPA and other Federal laws.

REGION 1 – CORRIDOR 223-224 – ANALYSIS TABLE

ID	Agency	Agency Jurisdiction	County	Primary Concern/ Opportunity	Corridor Location (by Milepost [MP])	Source: Context	Agency Review and Analysis
						energy projects and how development would impact residents' quality of life.	
Hydrology: Surface Water							
223-224 .006	BLM	Las Vegas FO	Clark, NV	Intermittent Stream: Willow Creek	MP 27.4	GIS Analysis	Utilities can either span or be buried under intermittent streams. Riparian vegetation could be avoided or impacts minimized or mitigated.
Lands and Realty: Military and Civilian Aviation							
223-224 .007	BLM	Pahrump and Las Vegas FOs	Nye and Clark, NV	Military Training Route – Visual Route	MP 11.7 to MP 47.2	GIS Analysis	Adherence to IOP 1 -Project Planning regarding coordination with DoD would be required.
223-224 .008	BLM	Pahrump and Las Vegas FOs	Nye and Clark, NV	Military Training Route – Instrument Route	MP 32.4 to MP 47.2	GIS Analysis	Adherence to IOP 1 -Project Planning regarding coordination with DoD would be required.
Lands and Realty: Transportation							
223-224 .009	BLM	Pahrump and Las Vegas FOs	Nye and Clark, NV	U.S. Highway 95	MP 6.9 to MP 17.2, MP 45.6 to MP 47.2	GIS Analysis. Comment on corridor abstract: the corridor passes over U.S. Highway 95 a number of times between MP 10 and MP 20. This would pose a challenge for construction and access and could potentially be impacted by a future I-11.	Consistent with BLM ROW regulations, notification to adjacent ROW holders would be provided. Coordination with NDOT would be required.
Specially Designated Areas							
223-224 .011	BLM	Las Vegas FO	Clark, NV	Mt. Charleston Scenic Byway	MP 10.7	GIS Analysis	Impacts would be analyzed and mitigated as part of the project-specific environmental review required under NEPA and other Federal laws.
223-224 .012	BLM	Red Rock/Sloan FO	Clark, NV	Red Rock Canyon NCA	Abuts corridor on south side, MP 6.9 to MP 17.1	GIS Analysis. Comment on corridor abstract: evaluate visual impacts.	While the corridor is located adjacent to the Red Rock Canyon NCA, the corridor does not traverse the NCA. However, the proximity to the NCA does require a narrower corridor width and limits the

REGION 1 – CORRIDOR 223-224 – ANALYSIS TABLE

ID	Agency	Agency Jurisdiction	County	Primary Concern/ Opportunity	Corridor Location (by Milepost [MP])	Source: Context	Agency Review and Analysis
							amount of additional development that would be allowed. Impacts would be analyzed and mitigated as part of the project-specific environmental review required under NEPA and other Federal laws.
223-224 .new5	BLM	Las Vegas FO, NV	Clark, NV	Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument	near MP 0	Comment on corridor abstract/ There is a 15-year sunset provision in the Tule Springs legislation which disallows transmission development along the Sheep Mountain Range. This constricts this corridor between a national monument and the Red Rock NCA. There was a request from stakeholders that all pending ROW applications be examined for viability given the new national monument status for Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument, as well as for the need for connection across the Las Vegas Valley. Consider fossil resources and wildlife connectivity, given proximity to DNWR. Evaluate visual impacts. Reroute the corridor to the south to avoid concern.	Lands were withdrawn to the National Park Service for a National Monument between MP 0.0 to MP 9.3. The portion of the corridor within the Tule Springs National Monument (MP 0 to MP 6.9) has been removed.
223-224 .new6	BLM	Las Vegas FO	Clark, NV	Proposed Las Vegas Wash ACEC	Not specified	Comment on corridor abstract: the ACEC is proposed in the Draft Southern Nevada RMP and would designate 12,296 acres to protect sensitive species	The ACEC has not been designated. If the ACEC is designated in the future, impacts would be analyzed and mitigated as part of the project-specific environmental review required under NEPA and other Federal laws.

REGION 1 – CORRIDOR 223-224 – ANALYSIS TABLE

ID	Agency	Agency Jurisdiction	County	Primary Concern/ Opportunity	Corridor Location (by Milepost [MP])	Source: Context	Agency Review and Analysis
<p>habitat and cultural and paleontological resources. The ACEC would be managed as a ROW avoidance area.</p>							
<p>Visual Resources</p>							
223-224 .013	BLM	Las Vegas and Pahrump FOs	Nye and Clark, NV	VRM Class III	MP 6.9 to MP 47.2 (entire corridor)	GIS Analysis.	VRM class objectives are binding land use plan decisions. Transmission facilities must demonstrate that they will conform to the VRM decisions in the land use plan through a hard-look visual impacts analysis outlined in BLM VRM Contrast Rating Handbook H 8431-1 (VRM Manual Section (MS) 8400, BLM 1986). Minimizing visual contrast remains a requirement of applicable VRM class objectives even when the proposed action is in conformance with these VRM class objectives (VRM MS-8400).
<p>INTERAGENCY OPERATING PROCEDURES (IOPS, OR BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES)</p>							
223-224 .004	BLM			Wildlife resources	No designated critical habitat intersects the corridor	RFI: consult closely with state fish and game agencies and the USFWS to ensure that valuable wildlife resources are protected from the "very high" risk to Imperiled species posed by this segment.	Adherence to IOPs is required.
<p>Other Issues</p>							
223-224 .new7						One stakeholder requested that the Agencies analyze current power being transmitted in the corridor as well as information about pending applications to establish need and/or opportunity to retrofit existing infrastructure. One	The Agencies have updated the corridor abstracts and the Section 368 Energy Corridor Mapping Tool with new information on pending applications and existing infrastructure within the Section 368 energy corridors. Regional reviews are not a NEPA process and therefore do not encompass the level of analysis required under NEPA. Revision, deletion, or addition

REGION 1 – CORRIDOR 223-224 – ANALYSIS TABLE

ID	Agency	Agency Jurisdiction	County	Primary Concern/ Opportunity	Corridor Location (by Milepost [MP])	Source: Context	Agency Review and Analysis
						stakeholder requested that no decisions on the corridor be made until the Southern Nevada District Office completes its revision to the 1998 Las Vegas RMP. There was a concern that corridor designations tend to induce ROW applications and development in corridor gaps. Last, input was provided clarifying existing capacity and potential for new capacity.	of Section 368 energy corridors will be considered within subsequent NEPA scoping for any land use planning or project-specific planning and will be analyzed with any newer information that may become available. Proposed project siting and collocation alternatives to address impacts would be analyzed as part of the project-specific environmental review required under NEPA and other Federal laws. The input provided by stakeholders regarding existing capacity and potential for future capacity has been added to the corridor abstracts and has been considered in the Agencies' analysis.

Abbreviations: Area of Critical Environmental Concern; BLM = Bureau of Land Management; CFR = Code of Federal Regulations; DNWR = Desert National Wildlife Refuge; DoD = Department of Defense; ESA = Endangered Species Act; FO = Field Office; GIS = geographic information system; IOP = Interagency Operating Procedures; MP = milepost; NCA = National Conservation Area; NDOT = Nevada Department of Transportation; NEPA = National Environmental Policy Act; NRA = National Recreation Area; NTRR = Nellis Test and Training Range; PEIS = Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement; RFI = Request for Information; RMP = Resource Management Plan; ROW = right-of-way; TCA = Tortoise Conservation Area; UNLV = University of Nevada-Las Vegas; USFS = Forest Service; USFWS = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; VEA = Valley Electric Association; VRM = Visual Resource Management; WECC = Western Energy Coordinating Council; WWEC = West-wide Energy Corridor