

Section 4.12

Population and Housing

Introduction

This section describes the affected environment and regulatory setting for population and housing, and discusses whether implementation of the proposed project would affect population and housing.

The proposed project is a response to growth in the San Benito-Monterey Counties area and is not expected to induce growth. During construction, the temporary increase in construction workers is expected to be accommodated in local lodging. Few homes are located along the alignment, and none are in the path of the alignment. No persons or homes are expected to be displaced. Impacts related to population and housing will be less than significant.

Methodology

Existing conditions were determined from a review of published literature, examination of aerial photographs, and site-specific field inspection of the locations of project components. The U.S. Census Bureau and AMBAG provided statistical data on affected county and city populations and housing.

Affected Environment

Regulatory Setting

No federal plans or policies related to population and housing apply to the project.

State of California

Housing Element

The Housing Element is one of seven elements required to be included in city and county General Plans. State law identifies the subjects that must be addressed in a Housing Element. These guidelines are identified in Article 10.6 of the State of California Government Code (Sections 65580 et seq.). State law specifies that the Housing Element must assess housing needs and evaluate the current housing market in the planning area, and then identify programs that will meet housing needs. The housing market evaluation includes a review of housing stock characteristics as well as housing cost, household incomes, special-need households, availability of land and infrastructure, and various other factors. Also included in this evaluation is the community's "Regional Housing Needs Allocation," which estimates the number of housing units that should be provided in the community to meet its share of new households in the region.

Local Regulations

Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments

Approximately every 5 years, AMBAG produces a regional forecast of population, housing, and employment for a region spanning the counties of Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz. Each forecast is produced with the best available data and is extensively reviewed by AMBAG's member agencies (AMBAG 2008).

The Monterey Bay Area 2008 Regional Forecast is an update of the previous 2004 forecast and addresses the 2005 to 2035 period. The region of study is forecasted for the population to grow by about 180,000. In regard to the affected areas of the proposed project, Monterey and San Benito Counties will grow slowly in the first years of the forecast, with steady and moderate growth through the end of the forecast period (AMBAG 2008).

Project Setting

San Benito County

San Benito County is situated in the Central Coast region of California, about 100 miles southeast of San Francisco, 40 miles east of Monterey, and 300 miles north of Los Angeles. Agriculture is the predominant economic activity in the county; however, increased development continues to infringe on more and more rural areas. During the 1990s, San Benito County was the fastest growing county

in California (County of San Benito 1993). As of 2000, San Benito County contained 53,234 persons and 16,499 housing units (Census 2000a). As of 2005, AMBAG estimated a population of 57,324 and dwelling units of 17,638. Regarding more recent forecasts, Table 4.12-1 describes the population and housing statistics from 2005 to 2035 for San Benito County, including the unincorporated areas.

Population

Between 2005 and 2035, AMBAG predicts that San Benito County will be the fastest growing county within the three-county Monterey Bay region. As depicted in Table 4.12-1, the population was 57,324 in 2005 (AMBAG 2008), and the county is projected to experience a 65% increase (to 94,731 persons) in 2035. The proposed project alignment generally will occur on unincorporated lands that are not expected to increase in population as much as the Cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista (discussed in further detail below). In 2005, the population of the unincorporated areas totaled 18,600. In 2035, this is expected to increase to 29,068 (AMBAG 2008).

Table 4.12-1. San Benito County Population and Households (2005–2035)

	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Population	57,324	62,431	68,471	76,140	83,383	89,431	94,731
Housing	17,638	19,187	21,110	23,483	25,800	27,674	29,404
Unincorporated Population and Households							
Population	18,600	20,079	21,737	24,720	26,671	27,429	29,068
Housing	6,373	6,879	7,457	8,471	9,181	9,482	10,035

Source: AMBAG 2008.

Housing

The average household size of San Benito County is 3.32 persons (Census 2000b). This is larger than the statewide average of 2.87 (Census 2000b), suggesting that households are more likely to contain families with children. Over time, as household sizes change, there may be more demand for residential units in the area. In 2005, there were 17,638 housing units in San Benito County; this was an increase from the 1993 amount of 12,378 units. With the increases in population projected through 2035 by AMBAG, housing units are expected to increase continuously as well. It is one of the County’s goals to create more affordable housing for persons of all income levels; this includes creating more multi-family residential units as well as mobile home facilities. Nevertheless, in 2000, single-family residential units accounted for approximately 83% of the housing units in the County (Census 2000c). Located just south of Highway 156, along Avenida Del Piero, are approximately 100 recently built single-family

residential units. The proposed project alignment will run east of this residential development, parallel with Avenida Del Piero.

City of Hollister

In 2000, the City of Hollister contained 34,413 persons and 9,924 housing units, which increased to 37,002 and 10,587, respectively, in 2005. The City of Hollister is the county seat and the largest city in San Benito County, with 65% of the county population as of 2005. The city is becoming increasingly urbanized as agriculture becomes less important to the local economy. Agriculture is declining within the city as development increases and moves into agricultural lands. Population and housing data from 2005 to 2035 are provided in Table 4.12-2. Between 2005 and 2035, Hollister population is expected to grow by approximately 70%.

Population

The population of Hollister increased by nearly 80%, from 19,212 residents in 1990 to 34,413 in 2000—at an annualized growth rate of 6% (City of Hollister 2005). Between 2000 and 2005, the population grew by 8%. Much of the increase in population can be attributed to an influx of people moving from surrounding counties, particularly Santa Clara County, where housing prices and median income are significantly higher. As a result, a dramatic change in commuting patterns has occurred, and nearly half of all Hollister residents are now commuting to areas outside of San Benito County for employment (City of Hollister 2005). By 2035, the city’s population is expected to be 62,756—a 70%-increase over 2005.

Table 4.12-2. City of Hollister Population and Households (2005–2035)

	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Population	37,002	40,415	44,613	49,064	54,143	59,259	62,756
Housing	10,587	11,544	12,816	14,085	15,605	17,108	18,221

Source: AMBAG 2008.

Housing

The rise in population has created a strong demand for housing, which has resulted in significant housing price increases. The increased amount of new development because of this demand has resulted in the loss of agricultural land and has created severe issues with the city’s infrastructure. Wastewater capacity issues have resulted in a moratorium for any development requiring new service connections. The moratorium will not be lifted until improvements are completed to increase capacity (City of Hollister 2005). Currently, the City of Hollister is working on building a new sewage treatment plant; this would increase wastewater capacity and lift the moratorium. The sewage plant is expected to begin treating wastewater this year (2008) (City of Hollister 2005).

Increased population has significantly affected housing production, needs, and affordability. About 80% of all the homes in Hollister are single-family residences (City of Hollister 2005). Single-family residences primarily are afforded only by persons with higher incomes, and it has become increasingly difficult for low-income classes to afford homes in the city. To provide for future population increases, more apartments and multi-family residential units will need to be developed in the city. It is possible that, as needs for housing rise, development pressure will increase in unincorporated areas of San Benito County, including open space and agricultural lands; however, this will be controlled by land use plans, zoning, and future reviews of spheres of influence.

City of San Juan Bautista

San Juan Bautista is a small rural town approximately 10 miles west of the City of Hollister and just southeast of the proposed project alignment in San Benito County. In 2000, the population and housing were 1,549 and 615, respectively—increasing to 1,722 and 678, respectively, by 2005. The demand for housing in this area is very high, and it is expected to increase parallel with population projections. Population and housing projections for San Juan Bautista are presented in Table 4.12-3. Population and housing in the city are projected to almost double by 2035.

Table 4.12-3. City of San Juan Bautista Population and Households (2005–2035)

	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Population	1,722	1,937	2,121	2,356	5,570	2,743	2,907
Housing	678	764	837	927	1,015	1,084	1,148

Source: AMBAG 2008.

Population

As described in Table 4.12-3, the population of San Juan Bautista is expected to increase continuously over the next two decades. Compared to increases in the City of Hollister, and the County as a whole, San Juan Bautista is projected to increase at a slower rate. While San Benito County’s population has soared more than 200% since 1950, San Juan Bautista’s population has increased by about 50% (City of San Juan Bautista 2006). The City of San Juan Bautista General Plan has explained that the City does not wish to have a large population and instead wishes to uphold its small-town, rural character as it is today.

Housing

San Juan Bautista desires to have a balance between affordable housing and maintaining a small town character. Many single-family homes have been added in and around San Juan Bautista during the last decade, and many more are planned. Most of these homes serve the upper end of the housing market (City of San Juan Bautista 2006). The average household size in San Juan Bautista is

2.73 persons; this is very close to the State average (2.9) but substantially lower than the County average (3.3). About 23% of the City’s households consists of people living alone, while 14% consists of large families (five or more persons) (City of San Juan Bautista 2006).

Approximately 47% of the City’s land development potential is located on sites that are already served by roads and utilities and are zoned for residential use (City of San Juan Bautista 2006). Potential constraints to the development of these sites may result from the City’s water and sewer capacity issues. The City’s ability to provide water, sewer, drainage, police, fire, streets, and other services is limited by its budget; and these limitations could restrict housing development. Wastewater treatment, specifically, was an issue for growth in the city. Residential growth has been constrained by sewer problems for most of the last 20 years. The City’s wastewater treatment plant, operated by a private firm through a contractual agreement with the City, was not meeting the State standard for effluent quality. As such, during the late 1980s, the City was under a Cease and Desist Order from the Regional Water Quality Control Board that resulted in a full growth moratorium until 1991. However, upon recent upgrades, the plant is now in compliance and provides tertiary treatment for waste water (City of San Juan Bautista 2006).

Monterey County

Monterey County, adjacent to San Benito County, has experienced growth in both population and housing. The county as a whole does not wish to become more developed. Instead, like the City of San Juan Bautista, the county aims to keep its small-town character. The proposed project alignment traverses the northeastern edge of the county, through unincorporated areas nearest to the city of Salinas, as well as the unincorporated area of Prunedale. Currently, no housing units are located along the proposed project alignment in Monterey County. Table 4.12-4 shows population and housing characteristics of Monterey County from 2005 to 2035.

Table 4.12-4. Monterey County Population and Households (2005–2035)

	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Population	422,632	445,309	466,606	483,733	499,341	515,549	530,362
Housing	137,338	147,221	156,061	162,857	169,933	176,236	182,082
Unincorporated Population and Households							
Population	106,117	109,509	111,105	113,778	114,469	113,628	114,052
Housing	38,869	42,506	44,442	45,406	46,668	47,139	48,688

Source: AMBAG 2008.

Population

In 2000, Monterey County contained 401,762 persons and 131,708 housing units (Census 2000a), increasing to 422,632 and 137,338, respectively, in 2005. By 2035, population and housing are expected to increase to 530,362 and 182,082 respectively.

For the last several decades, the percentage of population residing in the unincorporated areas of the county has decreased in comparison to the population of the total county. In 1980, population in the unincorporated areas represented 29% of the total countywide population. By 2000, however, that percentage had decreased to 25% of total countywide population (County of Monterey 2003). Approximately 49% (49,528 persons) of the county's unincorporated population resides in a defined community (County of Monterey 2003). The largest of these communities in terms of population is the Prunedale area, with 16,432 residents in 2000. Prunedale is the closest community to the proposed project alignment.

Housing

There were 131,708 housing units in the County of Monterey in 2000 (Census 2000a). During the decade from 1990 to 2000, approximately 48% of new units added to the county's housing stock were located in the City of Salinas (County of Monterey 2003). The City of Salinas is approximately 15 miles southwest of the proposed project alignment. Household size in Monterey County has increased since 1990. The 2000 Census reported that the average persons per household in the county was 3.14, which is higher than the statewide average of 2.9 (Census 2000a).

The housing stock in the unincorporated areas of Monterey County is primarily single-family housing. The agricultural/rural areas of the county typically have single-family homes on large parcels of land (County of Monterey 2003). Nearest to the proposed project alignment, the community of Prunedale has more traditional "subdivision-type" homes that have been built in recent decades. The predominant housing type throughout the county, regardless of geographic area, is a single-family unit. Approximately 82% of the housing stock consisted of single-family units in the unincorporated areas of the county as of January 2000 (County of Monterey 2003).

The focus of new construction and infrastructure activities in the unincorporated areas will be concentrated during 2002–2008 in the five Community Areas of Fort Ord, Rancho San Juan, Boronda, Castroville, and Pajaro (County of Monterey 2003). The area of Rancho San Juan, located between the City of Salinas and the unincorporated community of Prunedale, will be closest to the proposed project alignment.

Environmental Effects

This section describes the potential impacts of the project and lists the thresholds used to conclude whether an impact would be potentially significant.

Significance Criteria

For this analysis, an impact pertaining to population and housing was considered potentially significant under CEQA if it would result in any of the following environmental effects; these criteria are based on professional practice and Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 et seq.):

- Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure);
- Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere; or
- Displace substantial numbers of people necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Potential to induce substantial population growth in an area, directly or indirectly – less-than-significant impact

Construction Impacts

Project construction activities are expected to last approximately 12-13 months. During peak construction times, PG&E will employ a minimal amount of people (PG&E employees plus contract workers). Some need for temporary accommodations could arise at times during construction. Because hotel and motel accommodations are present within the project area, this is considered a less-than-significant impact.

Operations Impacts

No direct growth-inducing impacts would occur because the project will not result in the significant increase of local population or housing, and will not indirectly induce growth by creating new opportunities for local industry or commerce. The project involves reconstruction of an existing power line, which will increase transmission capacity in the area. This could accommodate additional economic or population growth. The project is designed to increase reliability and accommodate existing and planned electrical load growth, rather than to induce growth.

Growth in the area is planned and regulated by city and county general plans, which contain land use policies to protect the region's open spaces and agricultural traditions, and to control urban development. The project is designed to meet immediate and projected electrical power needs in the San Benito-Monterey service area based on current and projected future demand. Like other utilities and public service providers, PG&E plans and upgrades electrical facilities incrementally based on growth projections provided by local government agencies. These growth projections reflect economic and residential developments that are planned and approved by city and county governments, which have authority over land uses. Local planning policies and zoning regulations have the biggest influence in controlling the pace and ultimate amount of growth in this area. In addition, electricity is not a key factor in land use planning in this area and is not the main obstacle to growth. The availability of electrical capacity by itself does not normally ensure or encourage growth within a particular area. Other factors such as economic conditions, land availability, population trends, water supply availability, sewer capacities, and local planning policies have a more direct effect on growth than the availability of services. (See Section 4.17 for a discussion of growth-inducing impacts.) The proposed project will not induce substantial population growth in the project area, and this impact is considered less than significant.

Potential to displace substantial numbers of existing housing – no impact

The proposed power line would traverse an existing PG&E power line easement paralleling county and city roads and traveling through open space, grazing lands, and agricultural lands. Currently, no houses are located within the alignment path or PG&E easements. However, approximately 100 recently built, single-family residential units are located in San Benito County, just south of Highway 156 along Avenida Del Piero. The proposed project alignment would run east of this residential development, parallel with Avenida Del Piero.

Addition of a second 115 kV circuit will not require PG&E to adjust easements, except at the Proposed River Crossing; construction will take place within the existing PG&E easements or in the Proposed River Crossing alignment, where no homes are present. The project will not conflict with housing units in the area because the portions of the route that pass through residential areas are adjacent to existing roads, and construction activities will take place within the boundaries of the existing easement or right of way. Homes do not directly abut the easement. Therefore, the proposed project will not displace existing housing. Additionally, as construction will be temporary and the alignment does not cross any of the residential units, the proposed project will not require removal or replacement of existing housing. No impact is associated with displacement of existing housing.

Potential to displace substantial numbers of people – no impact

As noted, the proposed power line will traverse an existing PG&E power line easement paralleling county and city roads and traveling through open space, ranches, and agricultural lands. As noted above, addition of a second 115 kV circuit will not require PG&E to adjust easements, except at the Proposed River Crossing—where no homes are present; the project will not conflict with housing units in the area. The portions of the route that pass through residential areas are adjacent to existing roads, and construction activities will occur within the boundaries of the easement. Therefore, the proposed project will not displace people, and there is no impact.

References

AMBAG. See Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments.

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