

2.15 Transportation and Traffic

| <i>Issues (and Supporting Information Sources):</i> | <i>Potentially Significant Impact</i> | <i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation</i> | <i>Less Than Significant Impact</i> | <i>No Impact</i> |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 15. TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC— Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume-to-capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that would result in substantial safety risks? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Result in inadequate emergency access? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Result in inadequate parking capacity? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., conflict with policies promoting bus turnouts, bicycle racks, etc.)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Setting

Del Norte County is primarily a rural, low-density county with its major trip attractors dispersed throughout the County. Therefore, the dominant mode of transportation is the private automobile. The roadway network that would be affected by the Proposed Project is located in north-western Del Norte County near the community of Smith River. The transportation system in the area of the Proposed Project is composed of an interconnected network of State and County roads. However, based on the layout and location of the Proposed Project, the only roadway in the study area that would be affected by the Proposed Project is U.S. Highway 101 (U.S. 101).

U.S. Highway 101

Regional and local access to the Proposed Project site is provided by U.S. 101, also known as the Pacific Coast Highway (See Figure 1-1). U.S. 101 originates in Los Angeles County, California, and generally runs north to Thurston County, Washington. In the study area, U.S. 101 is a two-lane northwest-southeast freeway that is under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 1, based in Eureka (Del Norte County, 2003). Direct access to the existing and proposed substation sites, as well as the proposed staging area, can be achieved by two existing driveways off the east side of U.S. 101. The driveways are south of Rowdy Creek Road and are separated by approximately 850 feet. Traffic volumes along U.S. 101 in the study area are moderate with an annual average daily traffic (ADT) level of 7,100 vehicle trips per day (Caltrans, 2007).

Public Transit

The Redwood Coast Transit (RCT) provides fixed-route bus service to most of the communities along the U.S. 101 corridor in the Proposed Project study area. Route 20 provides Monday through Saturday transit service between Smith River and Arcata in Humboldt County (RCT, 2007).

Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation

Bicycle facilities include bike paths, bike lanes, and bike routes. Bike paths are paved trails that are separated from the roadways. Bike lanes are lanes on roadways that are typically designated for use by bicycles by striping, pavement legends, and signs. Bike routes are roadways that are typically designated for bicycle use with signs, but do not have additional width for bicycle lanes. In Del Norte County, segments of U.S. 101 have bicycle lanes and are designated as the California Pacific Bike Route. In the study area, the California Pacific Bike Route is along S. Fred D. Haight Drive, west of U.S. 101 and Rowdy Creek (CCT, 2007).

Pedestrian facilities include sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian signals. Within the vicinity of the study area, there are no designated pedestrian facilities that would be affected by construction activities or operations of the Proposed Project.

Airports

The nearest airport in the vicinity of the study area is Jack McNamara Field Airport, which is located approximately 11 miles to the south-southwest. There are no private or public airstrips in the vicinity of the study area.

Regulatory Context

The regulation of transportation facilities in the Proposed Project study area is under the jurisdiction of the State and Del Norte County. State jurisdiction includes permitting and regulation of the use of State roads, while County jurisdiction includes implementation of policies, and regulations, as well as management and regulation of County roads. Applicable State and County rules and regulations related to traffic and transportation issues are discussed below.

California Department of Transportation

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) manages interregional transportation, including management of construction activities within or above State Roadways. Caltrans is also responsible for permitting and regulating the use of State roadways. The roadway (i.e., U.S. 101) that would be used for regional and local access to the Proposed Project site is under Caltrans' jurisdiction. Caltrans requires that permits be obtained by project proponents for transportation of oversized loads and transportation of certain materials, and for construction-related traffic disturbances. Caltrans regulations would apply to the transportation of oversized loads on U.S. 101 associated with the construction of the Proposed Project.

Del Norte County General Plan

The Proposed Project would not affect any local roads, including those under the jurisdiction of Del Norte County. County policies and regulations regarding the design or use of roadways are detailed in the Transportation and Circulation sections of the *Del Norte County General Plan* (Del Norte, 2003). However, because the plan focuses on the design and implementation of circulation system improvements, policies in these elements do not directly relate to the Proposed Project.

Transportation and Traffic Impacts and Mitigation Measures

According to the *CEQA Guidelines*, a project would normally result in an impact to transportation and traffic if it would cause an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system. Post-construction maintenance and inspection activities involving one or two vehicle trips per month on U.S. 101 would be the only long-term effect of the Proposed Project. Therefore, these operational impacts would be less than significant.

The duration of impacts related to short-term construction trips would be limited to the proposed three-month construction period. With the exception of equipment and material hauling, no portion of the Proposed Project construction activities would occur within or above a public road right-of-way. Long-term impacts would be less than significant.

- a) **Increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system: *Less than significant. See discussion under b.***
- b) **Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways: *Less than significant.***

The Proposed Project would not introduce any new uses to the study area that would generate long-term changes in traffic; therefore, potential traffic and transportation effects would be confined to construction of the Proposed Project.

Three months of construction activities are anticipated to be required to implement the Proposed Project. Daily vehicle trips would be generated associated with the arrival and departure of construction workers. Heavy truck trips would be required for hauling equipment and materials to and from the construction site. It is estimated that up to 10 workers would be required to construct the Proposed Project. Construction activities would include hauling of oversize loads, including poles, conductor spools, substation hardware, various types of equipment, etc.

Construction of the Proposed Project would generate both construction worker and truck delivery trips. Assuming a trip generation rate of 1.5 trips per day per worker, the up to 10 employees would not be anticipated to generate more than 15 auto round trips per workday. Accounting for the delivery of construction components and material

excavation, the total number of off-site construction truck trips would be up to 20 round trips (40 one-way trips) per work day over a three-month period.

Construction-generated traffic would be temporary and therefore would not result in any long-term degradation in operating conditions or level of service on any of the roadways in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. The primary impacts from the movement of construction trucks would include short-term and intermittent lessening of roadway capacities due to slower movements and larger turning radii of the trucks compared to passenger vehicles. This short-term increase in vehicle trips would not significantly affect level of service and traffic flow on U.S. 101; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- c) **Change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location, that results in substantial safety risks: *No impact.***

The Proposed Project would not change air traffic patterns nor would it require the use of helicopters or other aircraft; therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

- d) **Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment): *No impact.***

The Proposed Project would not change the configuration (alignment) of area roadways, would not result in construction activities within a public road right-of-way, and would not introduce types of vehicles that are not already traveling on area roads; therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

- e) **Result in inadequate emergency access: *No impact.***

No public or private roadways that could be used for emergency access would be closed or otherwise blocked at any time by construction activities or operations of the Proposed Project. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in inadequate emergency access and no impacts are anticipated.

- f) **Result in inadequate parking capacity: *Less than significant.***

Operations of the proposed Morrison Creek Substation would not require staff to be located at the substation site. Once a month, one or two vehicles would park at the site during routine inspections and maintenance activities; therefore, there would be no long-term effect on parking capacity at the site. During construction, vehicles associated with the Proposed Project would be parked at the proposed staging area, existing Simonson Substation, or the proposed Morrison Creek Substation locations, which are located on private property. In addition, Proposed Project construction activities would not generate a substantial number of parked vehicles at the Proposed Project site. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks): *No Impact.*

The Proposed Project would have no short-term or long-term impacts on demand for alternative transportation or on alternative transportation facilities; therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

References – Transportation and Traffic

Caltrans (California Department of Transportation). 2007. 2006 Traffic Volumes on California State Highways. Accessed the Traffic and Vehicle Data Systems Unit website (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops//saferesr/trafdata/index.htm>) on October 17, 2007.

California Coastal Trail (CCT). 2007. Accessed California Coast Trail.info website (http://www.californiacoastaltrail.info/cms/archives/cte_2003.php?aid=25) on November 29, 2007.

Del Norte County, 2003. Del Norte County General Plan, Section 8, Transportation and Circulation. January 28, 2003.

Redwood Coast Transit. (RCT). 2007. Accessed Del Norte County Public Transit – Redwood Coast Transit website (<http://www.redwoodcoasttransit.org/index.html>) on October 24, 2007.