



California Public Utilities Commission  
**Potrero to Hunters Point Cable Project**

**Summary of Public Outreach Conducted During  
Development of Initial Study**

*Prepared by Public Affairs Management*

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## I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) has submitted an application to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for a Permit to Construct (PTC) an underground electric power cable between the switchyards of the Potrero and Hunters Point power plants in the southeast sector of San Francisco. The CPUC is evaluating three potential routes or “alternatives,” including PG&E’s proposed project alternative, ranging from 1.8 to 2.9 miles in length. The cable would be constructed in underground duct banks, primarily along public streets, but two alignments would cross City-owned land and land owned by the San Francisco Chronicle. The CPUC also is considering a variation of one of the alternatives that includes an overhead crossing of Islais Creek. The CPUC is conducting an environmental review of the proposed project and is looking at all of the alignments at an equal level of detail in the Initial Study.

## II. PUBLIC OUTREACH OVERVIEW

The CPUC conducted the following activities during development of the Initial Study to inform the community and solicit comment on this project:

Stakeholder Interviews: The CPUC identified individuals representing a cross-section of community interests and conducted a number of informal briefings to identify issues, interests, and other general concerns.

Informational Letter: The CPUC mailed a letter providing an overview of the project to a mailing list of approximately 1,500 including elected officials, stakeholders, and property owners/occupants along each of the three alignments currently being considered. The letter also noticed the July 22, 2004 Community Meeting. In addition, the letter was distributed at a meeting of the Potrero Hill Task Force and to the San Francisco Department of Environment’s list of stakeholders.

Public Meeting: The CPUC hosted an informational meeting to present the Potrero to Hunters Point Cable Project and to review preliminary findings from the Initial Study. Approximately 15 members of the public attended the meeting. Meeting participants represented several interest groups, including Environmental Justice Advocacy, the Muwekma Ohlone Park, Californians for Renewable Energy, the Bay Park Owners Association, the Potrero Power Plant Advisory Task Force, and the Bayview, Hunters View, Potrero/Dogpatch, and Potrero Hill neighborhoods (*See Appendix D for a listing of Community Meeting attendees*).

Project Information Line and Web Site: The CPUC established an information line (415-962-8467) and web site ([www.potreroHPcable.com](http://www.potreroHPcable.com)) to enable the public to ask questions, provide comments, and get more information on the proposed project and project alternatives. In addition, an e-mail address ([potreroHPcable@esaassoc.com](mailto:potreroHPcable@esaassoc.com)) was established for interested parties to ask questions and/or provide written or verbal comments.

### III. SUMMARY OF JULY 22, 2004 COMMUNITY MEETING PRESENTATION

Julie Ortiz, Public Affairs Management (PAM), opened the meeting and introduced representatives of the California Public Utilities Commission, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and the environmental review team. Julie stated the purpose of the meeting, which is to inform the community of the Permit to Construct Application submitted by PG&E to the CPUC, to present preliminary findings of the Initial Study, and to solicit comments and input from meeting attendees. Julie reviewed the agenda, handouts, and meeting guidelines before introducing John Boccio, Project Manager with the California Public Utilities Commission.

John Boccio, CPUC, explained the regulatory authority of the CPUC and the project review process. Dale Miller with Environmental Science Associates reviewed the CPUC environmental review process and the alignments currently being considered.

Dale Miller, ESA, reviewed components of the project, which include a 2.5 mile power line between the Potrero and Hunters Point switchyards, new equipment at the Potrero and Hunters Point switchyards (breakers, voltage transformers, bus connections/structures, lighting), a small control building at the Hunters Point Switchyard, nine underground concrete vaults, underground duct banks, a conduit for fiber optic cable, and excavated materials storage and construction staging areas. Dale reviewed construction impacts including cable right-of-way, access required for construction, necessary trench sizes, locations requiring bores (tunneling), and vault locations.

Dale noted that the primary purpose of the project is to improve the reliability of San Francisco's transmission and distribution system to accommodate current and future demand. The secondary purpose is to provide one of the components necessary to close the Hunter's Point Power Plant. PG&E operates the Hunters Point Power Plant under a contract with the California Independent System Operator (CAISO). CAISO identified seven things that had to be done to close the Hunters Point Power Plant, including the Potrero to Hunters Point Cable Project, the Jefferson-Martin project, and a number of small projects in the Peninsula. Some of these projects have been completed and some have not.

#### Alternatives Under Evaluation (See attached Alternatives Route Map)

- PG&E Proposed Route (Along Evans Avenue, Marin Street, Cesar Chavez, Minnesota Street, 25<sup>th</sup> street, Tennessee Street, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Illinois Street)
- Alternative Route 1 (Along Jennings Street, Cargo Way, Across/Under Islais Creek, and along Illinois Street)
  - Islais Creek crossing utilizing underground duct vault. (Note: PG&E and the City of San Francisco are in dispute regarding the viability of the underground vault. The viability of the duct needs to be determined.)
  - Islais Creek crossing utilizing overhead transmission (Note: Because Islais Creek is a navigable waterway, the tower required for an overhead crossing would be substantial.)
- Alternative Route 2 (Along Quint Street, Cargo Way and Jennings Street)
- No Project

Dale reviewed other related energy projects currently being considered, including San Francisco's siting of combustion turbines adjacent to the Potrero Power Plant, a 115-kV power line between the Hunters Point Power Plant and the Martin Substation, and a 230-kV power line in the Peninsula between Redwood City and Brisbane (referred to as the Jefferson-Martin Transmission Project). Dale noted that all of the 115-kV power lines within San Francisco are intended to improve system reliability, reinforce existing lines, and ensure power can be transferred seamlessly within the City. Dale also noted that while the Potrero to Hunters Point Cable Project is not specifically related to the Jefferson-Martin Transmission Project, the fate of the Jefferson-Martin Project will determine future power generation needs within the City of San Francisco.

Potentially significant project-related impacts identified to date are primarily related to construction and include:

- Traffic impacts
- Air quality and noise impacts
- Hazardous materials handling/removal, storage, and disposal
- Short terms impacts to businesses along Evans Avenue
- Impacts from trench dewatering activities

Other potential impacts identified include:

- Electromagnetic field exposure
- Lighting/glare impacts at the Potrero and Hunters Point switchyards from breaker and new structures

The Draft Initial Study for the Potrero to Hunters Point Cable Project will be released in August 2004 and will be followed by a 30-day comment period. The Draft Initial Study will determine the extent of environmental review to be conducted and the type of environmental document that will be prepared by October 2004. If a Negative Declaration is prepared, there will be a 30-day public review period. If an Environmental Impact Report is prepared, there will be a 45-day public review period. Based on the extent of comments received on the draft environmental document and the length of the public review period, a final environmental document may be released in November/December 2004. The CPUC is anticipated to make a final decision on the proposed project in December 2004 or January 2005.

Julie Ortiz reviewed how to provide comments on the proposed project and initiated the question/comment portion of the meeting.

#### **IV. SUMMARY OF COMMENTS/DISCUSSION FROM STAKEHOLDER BRIEFINGS AND PUBLIC MEETING**

Below is a summary of comments and questions made verbally during stakeholder briefings (noted in italics) and at the July 22, 2004 public meeting. The same comment made by multiple parties is listed only once with a note indicating more than one person made the comment. Comments are organized by topic for ease of review.

## A. Procedure

- If there was a 30-day period to provide comment on the PG&E application submitted in winter 03/04, and there was no protest, why is an environmental review necessary? Residents did not submit comments on the PG&E application so that the Potrero to Hunters Point Cable Project would be expedited and the Hunters Point Power Plant could be closed as soon as possible. San Francisco should not have been allowed to file a protest after that comment period. The effect of the City dispute regarding the vault under Islais Creek and the ensuing environmental review is going to delay both the construction of the Potrero to Hunters Point Cable Project and closure of the Hunters Point Power Plant.
- When will a final decision be made on this project?
- Will meeting attendees get a copy of the environmental document?

## B. Alternatives/Alignments

### **1) PG&E's Proposed Project (PG&E refers to as Preferred Route)**

- I support PG&E's proposed project and the originally proposed route.
- The City of San Francisco supports the Potrero to Hunters Point Cable Project as a means of closing the Hunters Point Power Plant, which is required by the California Independent System Operator (CAISO). The City also supports the Jefferson-Martin Transmission Line. The City filed a protest not against the Potrero to Hunters Point Cable project but against PG&E's proposed route. The City wants the shortest alignment to be implemented so that the project will be built on time. However, recently, the City withdrew its protest to facilitate the project being built and being built on time.
- What are the criteria for selecting an alignment? Why wouldn't the shortest route between Point A and Point B be implemented?
- *PG&E's preferred route might face community opposition, particularly from the Dog Patch neighborhood.*
- *What is PG&E's rationale for the "zig zag" aspect of its preferred route, particularly the alignment between Cesar Chavez and Evans? Couldn't this route be more direct?*

### **2) Alternative Route 1 (Islais Creek)**

- Why not use the existing duct vaults under Islais Creek instead of boring under Third Street?
- Is PG&E opposing using the existing duct vaults to ensure the cable project will not be built so that they can continue operating the Hunters Point Power Plant?

- If PG&E and the City are unable to agree on the viability of the vault, the matter should be forwarded to an arbitrator.
- *Alternative Route 1 (crossing Islais Creek) may be the community's preference.*
- *Is Alternative Route 1 the least controversial?*
- *Two stakeholders stated that aerial hangers over Islais Creek would face opposition and raise concerns about visual impacts and electromagnetic fields.*
- *Cargo Way (Alternative Routes 1 and 2) has far less activity than Evans Avenue (Preferred Route) and would be a better option.*
- *All the factors that make the Islais Creek route cheaper are the reasons why the two power plants are located where they are.*
- *The shortest route appears to be best because it runs through a very industrial area and affects fewer people. Keep the transmission lines away from residential areas.*
- *There is long history of public concern regarding the Illinois Street Bridge. Any proposal to build anything over the creek or under it will touch many nerves.*
- *Are liquefaction concerns the reason PG&E doesn't want to use the conduits under Islais Creek? Would understand the need to go around the creek if there is a need to avoid areas prone to liquefaction.*
- *I watched the conduits being installed and believe they extend under Illinois Street to the Potrero plant. Given this, why would PG&E need to trench on Illinois for this project?*
- The conduits under Islais Creek are detrimental because they lie under the force main that carries effluent to the Bay.
- The conduit underneath Islais Creek has been compressed to an egg shape and flooded with water, sand, and mud. Because of the damage, using the existing conduit to cross Islais Creek is not a viable option.
- *Would it be too costly to fix the conduit constructed by the City under Islais Creek? Could it be resealed and used?*
- *Would the City be responsible for installing a new conduit if Alternative Route 1 were selected?*
- *Could PG&E simply build another conduit under the creek and assume the cost itself as part of this project?*
- *Several stakeholders noted that the feasibility of using the conduits under Islais Creek needed to be investigated/confirmed.*
- *PG&E was responsible for the faulty bores.*

### **3) Alternative Route 2 (Cargo Way)**

- *Stakeholders expressed confusion about the “zig zag” aspect of Alternative Route 2 between Cesar Chavez and Evans and about the impacts of Alternative 2 on the Dog Patch neighborhood.*

### **4) No Project**

- Do not minimize the impact of the No Project Alternative, which is the continued operation of the Hunters Point Power Plant and the continued impacts of power plant emissions on human health and air and water quality.

### **5) Other Alternatives**

- I oppose projects in the southeast sector that in any way support the continued operation of the Hunters Point Power Plant. If you are connecting a line to bring power from the Martin Substation to the Hunters Point Power Plant, why not connect directly to the Jefferson-Martin transmission line now so that the Hunters Point Power Plant can be closed? Why isn't this being considered as an alternative?
- Why isn't an alignment through Port of San Francisco property being considered? PG&E would have to pay the Port for a license but would save money on costs associated with construction in public roadways.
- *Perhaps modifying Alternative 1 to circumvent Islais Creek and avoid the underwater crossing should be explored.*
- *If the conduits are too wet to be used, make the other route(s) more direct between the Potrero Switchyard and Evans Avenue.*
- *Are there any freeway overpasses with underground or hanging transmission lines? Would this be an option on 280 to eliminate the jog around Cesar Chavez and Marin?*
- *You will run into concerns no matter what route you follow.*

### **C. Environmental Review/Impacts**

- Consider archaeological sites and construction impacts on cultural/native American resources.
- Is depressed business going to be considered the status quo although the Muni construction has been going on for three years? The environmental document should look at business trends before and during construction of the Third Street Light Rail Project to characterize the correct baseline (before the Third Street project) for socioeconomic impacts.

- *Business owners on Third Street are aware of this project and have concerns about potential construction and electromagnetic field impacts.*
- *The Dog Patch neighborhood is very concerned about high voltage power lines and electromagnetic field impacts and may try to get Potrero Hill involved to delay the project.*
- *You should face electromagnetic field issues straight on and make sure you are familiar with the City's Precautionary Principle.*
- *Will all of the project be underground? Will the project involve trenching? For how long?*
- *Whatever construction duration PG&E estimates should be doubled. You should check PG&E's history/ record of street excavation and backfilling to get a sense of how long this will really take.*
- *You need to review the City planning department's Better Neighborhoods Plan for the area from 22<sup>nd</sup> to Cesar Chavez. (Contact Jasper Rubin with the Planning Department). Extensive community-based planning has been done and quite a bit of residential development (particularly on Illinois Street) and biotech has been targeted for the area. Your environmental review needs to take this into consideration, particularly potential electromagnetic field impacts in the context of increased residential use.*
- *The environmental review should evaluate this project as a stand-alone effort and look at what might happen if Jefferson-Martin weren't built.*
- *Project seems pretty straightforward. Key focus of the environmental review should be on clear analysis of potential impacts and mitigations along the proposed routes.*

#### D. Cost

- This failure of the City to build a viable conduit represents an enormous waste of money in which the environment and the community paid for everything and PG&E and the City are once again being bailed out by the ratepayer/taxpayer.
- Are ratepayers going to end up paying for these projects? Consider impacts on ratepayers in the southeast sector that used to get their electricity from Hetch Hetchy.
- A significant amount of money was spent by the City of San Francisco to build the conduit under Islais Creek, which is filled with water and even collapsed in some locations. It appears that the City is trying to pass the cost of their failed conduit on to PG&E ratepayers, such that San Francisco residents will be paying for the conduit twice. San Francisco residents and PG&E ratepayers should not have to bear the cost of the City's failed attempt to build a viable conduit.
- What is the approximate cost per mile of a 115 kV urban transmission line?
- What is the cost of constructing a super conducting transmission line in an urban area?

- *Cost control is a key issue and should be closely evaluated. PG&E originally said Jefferson-Martin would cost \$110 million and now it is estimated to cost \$270 million. These costs are passed on to ratepayers.*
- *What is the cost differential among the routes?*

#### E. Impacts to Southeast Sector

- The Bayview Hunters Point community wants the Hunters Point Power Plant out. All of the projects continually proposed for this part of the City do nothing to help the community but only make other people richer. The community does not need these new projects – there are too many health impacts on the community already.
- Too many people who live outside the Bayview Hunters Point community are making decisions that affect the future and well-being of the community.
- The combination of indoor (from substandard housing) and outdoor pollution in Bayview Hunters Point is deadly.
- Overlapping construction projects are upsetting.
- Was the Hunters Point Power Plant supposed to be closed already? Will the Potrero to Hunters Point Cable Project reduce health impacts from the Hunters Point Power Plant?
- I support these transmission lines as well as the Jefferson-Martin Project because these projects are necessary to close the Hunters Point Power Plant.
- A number of residents noted that businesses in the project area have already been heavily impacted by construction of the Third Street Light Rail Project.
- Bayview Hunters Point businesses have been so impacted by the many projects in the area, special consideration should be made.
- *You will find a lot of sensitivity among merchants on/near Third Street who are suffering from poor management of aspects of the light rail project that have resulted in longer stretches and durations of construction disruption.*

#### F. Project Coordination

- Why are so many projects dumped in Bayview Hunters Point and why aren't these projects (such as the Third Street Light Rail and Islais Creek Bridge and Illinois Creek Bridge projects) better coordinated? The Bayview Hunters Point Community is not happy with the City, Muni, PG&E, and others because of this.
- *Given these plans, there is much discussion about establishing public benefit zones in the southeast sector where increased housing could be used to pay for environmental improvements. There is certainly enough need and resources in the neighborhoods to make this happen. But there is also a long history of*

*disorganization and lack of communication among the multiple agencies that would need to be involved to make this happen.*

- *Another big issue is PG&E's undergrounding of overhead utility lines and community concern that this isn't being coordinated with other projects like yours to speed up the process and minimize construction-related disruption. You would gain a lot of support for your project if you could connect it with local undergrounding.*
- *In terms of how all of this might affect projects like yours, better coordination between all projects in the southeast sector will enable us to achieve more district-wide improvements and community benefits.*
- *There must be strong interdepartmental coordination among City and other agencies in the planning and implementation of any project. PG&E should not be left to its own devices on this project.*

### G. Other Related Projects

- *The City is advocating for its own project, which is the siting of three combustion turbines adjacent to the Potrero Power Plant. It is therefore to the City's advantage to delay the Potrero to Hunters Point Cable and Jefferson-Martin Transmission Line projects until they can get a permit from the California Energy Commission to continue operation of the Hunters Point Power Plant. The City's motive for this is to get into the power business by selling electricity. The combustion turbines the City is advocating for would operate under a long term contract with the California Department of Water Resources. So ultimately, the ratepayers in PG&E territory would be paying for the City's power plants, as well as the power that the City's power plants will produce.*
- *Ultimately, the most cost effective route and project is to build the Potrero to Hunters Point Cable Project as proposed by PG&E as soon as possible so that the Jefferson-Martin Transmission Line can be constructed. This would provide enough transmission capacity to San Francisco so that the Hunters Point Power Plant and proposed combustion turbines would not be necessary. The Potrero to Hunters Point Cable Project and Jefferson-Martin Transmission Line would meet the reliability needs of San Francisco without any new power plants, without the Hunters Point Power Plant, and without all of the associated environmental and health impacts of these facilities.*
- *Will the transmission lines support the generation and distribution of renewable energy?*
- *The Jefferson-Martin will create a bottleneck where it enters the City and local grid improvements will be necessary. Suggest you read PG&E's AP-1 study for more details.*
- *PG&E said the peaker plants won't be necessary if the Jefferson-Martin line is built.*
- *I support the project's goal to improve transmission and reduce local generation. I recognize the project is the least controversial portion of some very controversial, interconnected efforts. These efforts should be addressed in a coordinated fashion for maximum community benefit.*
- *This project is necessary to upgrade the City's internal transmission system, regardless of what happens with the Jefferson-Martin project.*

- *Both power plants could be shut down without the Jefferson-Martin project.*
- *Internal transmission system upgrades will facilitate constructing the peaker plants.*
- *Review the CAISO 2003 Load Serving Capability Study for detailed information on all proposed PG&E's transmission improvements within San Francisco.*
- *Concerned about what appears to be "shell games" by PG&E to pit people/organizations in the Peninsula who are opposed to the Jefferson-Martin Project against people in Potrero and Bayview Hunters Point who support closure of the Hunters Point Power Plant.*

#### H. Outreach

- *Tonight's meeting conflicts with a Hunters Point Shipyard Restoration Advisory Board meeting, the attendees of which would otherwise be here.*
- *Was the public notified of this meeting?*
- *Recommend a workshop on all of the projects proposed for the southeast sector with the District Supervisor and local experts.*
- *Give community groups a small budget to recruit community representatives to attend public meetings.*
- *Materials should be one-page, use simple language, and should be bilingual.*
- *Consider outreach to local schools.*
- *Politicians need to be at the table.*
- *You need to provide people time up front to vent about these bigger issues before moving on to the specifics of your own project.*
- *Not a lot of people know about this project. It should be publicized more.*
- *Consult the Dog Patch Neighborhood Association, Potrero Merchants Association, and Bayview Merchants.*
- *Two interview participants recommended reviewing the Friends of Islais Creek web site at [www.islais.org](http://www.islais.org) for more history on the conduits under Islais Creek.*
- *Your map needs to clearly show how this project connects with the Jefferson-Martin line and supports increased transmission and not new generation. Otherwise showing a power line between the two plants may raise concern among community members that this project may somehow increase generation at the Hunters Point plant.*

- *Strongly recommend highlighting the role the Potrero to Hunters Point cable will play in improving the local transmission system, not just its connection to Jefferson-Martin.*
- *Public needs more information/ education about the conduits under Islais Creek.*

## APPENDICES

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Informational Letter/Meeting Notice	Appendix A
List and Summary of Stakeholder Interviews Conducted	Appendix B
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Community Meeting Attendees	Appendix D
Community Meeting Agenda	Appendix E
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Community Meeting Handout: Other Related Projects	Appendix G