

5.18 Mandatory Findings of Significance

MANDATORY FINDING OF SIGNIFICANCE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (<i>Cumulatively considerable</i> means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Does the project have environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Significance criteria established by CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G.

- a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. As described in Section 5.4, Biological Resources, the project could result in impacts to special-status species and their habitat. However, implementation of the APMs and mitigation measures described in Section 5.4 would reduce these potential impacts to less than significant levels. Similarly, Section 5.5, Cultural Resources, shows that the project would have a less than significant impact on important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. With the APMs and mitigation measures in this IS, the proposed project would not have a significant adverse effect on natural resources, either by itself or cumulatively with other projects. No significant impacts would occur that could not be mitigated to a less than significant level.

- b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. CEQA defines a cumulative impact as an effect that is created as a result of the combination of the proposed project together with other projects (past, present, or future) causing related impacts. Cumulative impacts of a project need to be evaluated when the project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable and, therefore, potentially significant.

A list of cumulative projects used for this analysis is provided in Table 5.18-1. The list includes projects in the vicinity of the project area in the Town of Windsor and unincorporated Sonoma County. The projects were reviewed to identify whether the proposed project could contribute to cumulatively significant impacts when evaluated in combination with other projects. The majority of the projects are located more than a mile from the proposed substation site.

Table 5.18-1. Planned and Current Projects in the Vicinity of the Proposed Project

Project Name	Address	Proximity to Substation Site (approx.)	Type of Development	Description	Size (approx.)
Sanderson Ford	10920 Old Redwood Highway	0.20 miles	Non-residential	Auto dealership	7 acres
LaFranchi Retail	8779 Conde Lane	2 miles	Non-residential	Retail	8.5 ksf ¹
Los Robles Meadows 1 & 2	9885 Old Redwood Highway	1 mile	Residential	Single-family detached	Unknown
Cole Subdivision	10095 Old Redwood Highway	0.70 miles	Residential	20 single-family attached/11 single	Unknown
Columbo	9933 Starr Road	0.80 miles	Residential	Single-family detached	Unknown
Coate Minor Subdivision #3	450 Duncan Drive	2 miles	Residential	Single-family detached	Unknown
Coate Minor Subdivision #4	475 Ginny Drive	2 miles	Residential	Single-family detached	Unknown
Town Green Village 5	8900 Bell Road	1.70 miles	Mixed use	66 single-family detached (condos) over 30.4 ksf ¹ retail	Unknown
Windsor Mill	8777 Bell Road	1.90 miles	Mixed use	53 single-family detached, 23 live/work townhomes, 127 single-family attached	Unknown
Village at Windsor	8975 Conde Lane	1.90 miles	Mixed use	16 single-family detached (condos) over 12.1 ksf ¹ retail	Unknown
Windsor Gateway	9397 Old Redwood Highway	1.40 miles	Mixed use	152 single-family detached (condos) over 40 ksf ¹ retail	Unknown
Bell Village Project	9290 Old Redwood Hwy	1.27 miles	Mixed use	403 residential units (condos and townhouses; 77.6 ksf ¹ retail	27.18 acres
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Source: PG&E 2011; PG&E 2011-2013.

As discussed in preceding Sections 5.1 through 5.17, many of the potential impacts of the proposed project would occur during construction, with few lasting operational effects. Because the construction-related impacts of the project would be temporary and localized, they would only have the potential to combine with similar impacts of other projects if they occur at the same time and in close proximity. No current and/or probable projects in the vicinity of the substation have anticipated construction schedules that would occur at the same time as the project and thus create a potential cumulative impact. Long-term impacts from the project, however, have the potential to combine with impacts from the projects listed in Table 5.18-1. These impacts are considered by issue area.

Aesthetics. With incorporation of APMs, construction and operation of the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to visual resources. The proposed substation would be situated low-lying terrain and would only be visible from foreground distances; the project would not be highly visible from public view corridors. Additionally, the proposed substation would be screened from public views by project landscaping and a wall, and by existing vegetation. Given the nearby light industrial and commercial development, the project's appearance would fit in with the existing setting. The replacement of existing wood poles with taller poles and the associated reconductoring and distribution underbuild are incremental changes that would not substantially alter the existing visual character found in the area.

The incremental change in visual conditions associated with the proposed project would contribute to a cumulative change in visual conditions, but represents only a relatively minor incremental change in cumulative conditions. Therefore, the project's visual effects are adverse, but not considerable enough to represent a significant cumulative impact.

Air Quality. Air emissions would result from both construction and operation of the substation. Implementation of APMs and Mitigation Measure AQ-1 discussed in Section 5.3, Air Quality, would reduce air emissions of particulate matter from the project to a less-than-significant level. Other pollutants resulting from construction activities are accounted for in emissions inventories for regional air quality maintenance plans and would not impede attainment or maintenance of ozone or carbon monoxide (CO) standards. The contributions to Sonoma County air emissions from substation construction are 6.9×10^{-3} percent or less of the County's annual total for greenhouse gases (GHG) and for substation operations and maintenance are 3.9×10^{-5} percent or less of the County's annual total for all pollutant categories. Any potential adverse cumulative air quality impacts would be short-term (lasting for the duration of construction) and would not be cumulatively considerable; therefore, the cumulative impact would be less than significant. Since the substation would be unmanned, there would be no vehicular emissions associated with regular commuting to and from the substation. As a result, there will be no significant cumulative impacts to Air Quality.

Biological Resources. Potential impacts to biological resources could occur from construction impacts on special-status species (particularly listed plants). The proposed substation site is bordered by transportation and developed land uses, making it discontinuous from surrounding habitat and less desirable for wildlife species. There are vernal pools along the Fulton No. 1 60 kV Power Line, and listed plants were found along the power line in June 2012. Biological resources could be affected by noise, dust, ground disturbance, sedimentation, and potential spills of hazardous materials. Potential impacts from the proposed project would be less than significant with the implementation of APMs and mitigation measures discussed in Section 5.4. The project would not represent a significant contribution to cumulative impacts. Impacts to biological resources during operation and maintenance would be the same as those during current operation and maintenance practices; therefore, no contribution to cumulative impacts would occur.

Cultural Resources. Neither short-term construction activities nor operation and maintenance activities would affect any known cultural resources with the implementation of APMs and mitigation measures discussed in Section 5.5. These measures would require marking the limits of the project area to exclude the known resources. Workers would also be trained to identify potential cultural resources and to halt and redirect construction activities in the event that unanticipated cultural resources are discovered. No cultural resources would be affected during project construction or during operation of the project, and no contribution to cumulative impacts would occur.

Geology and Soils. The project would not increase potential risks associated with seismic events or other geologic hazards. Short-term construction impacts to soils, including unstable soils, have the potential to occur; however, implementation of the APMs described in Section 5.6 would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions would result from the burning of fuel required to operate construction equipment and vehicle use during construction activities. The most common GHGs associated with fuel combustion are CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O. Greenhouse gas reduction measures would be implemented to reduce already less-than-significant GHG emissions. Any potential adverse cumulative GHG impacts would be short-term and not cumulatively considerable; therefore, GHG emissions would have a less than significant cumulative impact. GHG emissions from operation and maintenance would be minimal, as the substation and power lines would be unmanned and would

require only infrequent maintenance. The use of sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆) in transformers would comply with CARB requirements on use and reporting. PG&E would install new SF₆ breaker designs that are guaranteed to have an annual leak rate of one-half of one percent or less. The small amount of emissions created during operation and maintenance would not significantly contribute to cumulative impacts.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials. The use of hazardous materials for the project would be minimal during construction and operation. Hazardous materials would be stored and used in compliance with applicable regulations. The project would not result in an increase in usage of hazardous materials. Impacts from routine use, transportation, disposal, and accidental spillage of hazardous materials would be reduced to a less than significant level with implementation of the APMs and mitigation measures discussed in Section 5.8.

Hydrology and Water Quality. The project would not substantially change drainage patterns at the site. It would require minimal water for dust control during construction and minimal use of water for irrigation of landscape vegetation during operation. With the implementation of the measures discussed in Section 5.9, the construction and operation of the substation would not adversely impact hydrology or water quality in the project area or contribute to a significant cumulative impact.

Land Use. The project would not conflict with applicable land use policies and regulations; therefore, the project would not contribute to cumulative impacts to land use.

Mineral Resources. No commercial mineral resources are known to exist within the project area and the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource; therefore, the project would not contribute to potential cumulative impacts that may result in the loss of mineral resources.

Noise. The proposed project is not expected to contribute to a long-term cumulative impact on ambient noise levels in the project area. Noise from construction activities would be audible to nearby residences, but most construction would be limited to daytime hours and would be short-term. Any required nighttime work would be of extremely short duration. Impacts from noise to nearby sensitive receptors would be less than significant with the implementation of APMs and Mitigation Measure N-1. No other projects in the area are expected to be under construction at the same time as the proposed project (see Table 5.18-1). Operation of the North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA) freight service (partial operations begun in 2011) and the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) passenger service (expected in service in 2014), would contribute to background noise levels in the vicinity of the substation; however, operational noise levels of the substation would be within allowable limits. As such, the project would result in a less than significant noise impact during construction and operations, and will not contribute to a significant cumulative impact.

Population and Housing. The proposed project would not result in impacts to population and housing. Construction workers would be existing local PG&E staff or contracted workers from the region. The project would not displace any existing housing or people. The proposed project would have no impacts on population and housing.

Public Services. The proposed project would not result in significant impacts to public services. The proposed project would not require the cessation or interruption of fire or police protection services, schools, or other public facilities. The project may require temporary restricted access to local parks. Impacts would be less than significant and would not contribute to a cumulatively significant impact on the parks in the project area.

Recreation. The proposed project would not cause a substantial increase in the use of or physical deterioration of parks or recreational facilities. The project would have no effects on recreation and would not contribute to cumulative effects associated with other projects.

Transportation and Traffic. Construction of the proposed project would have the potential for temporary impacts to traffic volumes, LOS standards, road hazards, and emergency access. Use of local roads for transport of construction equipment and construction personnel would be temporary and short-term. Distribution line installation would require temporary lane closures; however, these slight increases in traffic would be temporary and short-term. Given the location of the project area in relation to other development projects in the region, the transportation network is sufficient to accommodate construction traffic to avoid significant impacts to any one area. Transportation and Traffic impacts would be temporary and less than significant, and would not contribute to cumulatively considerable impacts.

Utilities and Service Systems. Implementation of other development projects could result in potential cumulative impacts to utilities, particularly local water supplies and wastewater facilities. In contrast, construction of the proposed project would temporarily require a minimal water supply and generate minimal amounts of wastewater. Construction would require the disposal of a less than significant amount of all types of waste. No expanded facilities or services would be needed for the project, and use and disposal of all water and waste products would comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Impacts to utilities and service systems during operation and maintenance would be the same as those during current operation and maintenance practices; therefore, no contribution to cumulative impacts would occur.

c. Does the project have environmental effects, which would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. The project would not substantially adversely affect human beings directly or indirectly. The Initial Study identified no environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings. Adverse effects would be mitigated by implementation of APMs and mitigation measures and in most instances would be related to short-term construction impacts. Nearby residents could be affected during construction by impacts related to air quality, hazardous materials, and noise. These potential impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level with the implementation of the APMs and mitigation measures included in this IS.

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