

11.0 LAND USE AND PLANNING, RECREATION, AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

11.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the existing land uses, recreational facilities, and agricultural resources within Pacific Gas and Electric Company's Windsor Substation Project area and evaluates the potential impacts to existing land uses, recreational facilities, and agricultural resources associated with project construction and operation. Impacts to land use, recreational facilities, and agricultural resources will be less than significant.

11.2 METHODOLOGY

Information relating to land use and planning, recreation, and agricultural resources was obtained from the Town of Windsor General Plan and Zoning Ordinance and the Sonoma County General Plan. The Sonoma County and Town of Windsor websites were consulted, and California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program maps and Williamson Act maps were examined. Site inspection of the project area and analysis of aerial photographs confirmed the existing conditions of the project site and the surrounding land uses.

11.3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

11.3.1 Regulatory Background

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has exclusive jurisdiction to regulate the design, siting, installation, operation, maintenance, and repair of electric transmission facilities. The project is therefore exempt from local land use and zoning requirements. However, as a part of the environmental review process for the project, local land use ordinances, goals, and policies are considered in evaluating potential impacts.

While local governments do not have the authority to regulate the design and operation of electrical transmission facilities, the CPUC requires consultation with affected local governments to assess relevant land use concerns in locating its facilities. The CPUC also encourages consultation on other issues of concern to local governments. As a part of the initial siting of the project, PG&E met with local government officials and the Town of Windsor's planners on several occasions to discuss potential concerns. The Town of Windsor's officials support the project as confirmed by the Town of Windsor's letter to PG&E, contained in Attachment A.

11.3.1.1 General Plan Land Use Designation

The project is located within the town limits of Windsor, which is located in Sonoma County, California. The following is a discussion of the project area's existing land uses and the general plan land use designation.

11.3.1.1.1 Town of Windsor

11.3.1.1.1.1 Substation and Power Line Interconnection

The proposed substation parcel is located entirely within the Town of Windsor. The Town of Windsor has been incorporated since 1992. The Town of Windsor General Plan has designated the site as Light Industrial (LI). The Tubular Steel Pole (TSP) (3/11) to be replaced along the existing Fulton No. 1 60 kV power line is located adjacent to the residential area to the west of the substation, land designated Surrounding Residential (SR).

11.3.1.1.1.2 Distribution Line

The distribution line installation (including pole removal, pole replacement, conductor replacement and undergrounding of a portion of the distribution line) along the Mitchell Lane and Conde Lane rights-of-way will occur in an area that is designated LI according to the Town of Windsor General Plan. The remaining portion of the distribution line work along the Hembree Lane right-of-way will occur on land that does not have a general plan designation because it is a landscape strip immediately adjacent to Highway 101.

11.3.1.1.2 Sonoma County

11.3.1.1.2.1 Substation and Power Line Interconnection

Because the proposed substation site and power line interconnection lies entirely within the Town of Windsor, the Sonoma County General Plan 2020 does not connote a land use designation on its Land Use Element maps. Rather, the Town of Windsor General Plan designates the land use. A Sonoma County Specific Plan for the Windsor area exists; however, the document was repealed with the adoption of the *Town of Windsor General Plan 2020* on September 23, 2008.

Even though Sonoma County does not designate the land use of the proposed substation site and power line interconnection, several of the county's General Plan goals and policies are still applicable to the environmental impact analysis of the project. A basic tenant of the Sonoma County General Plan Land Use Element is to encourage growth inside city limits and not in unincorporated county areas, including discouraging the extension of utilities that might facilitate growth in non-urban areas. Goals LU-1 through LU-6 encourage infill development in urban areas and discourage development, including the extension of utilities into rural, unincorporated county areas.

The proposed substation site and power line interconnection is located within the Outer Safety Zone A (OSZ-A) according to the Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport *Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan*. The proposed substation site is approximately 1.26 miles from the end of the airport runway.

11.3.1.1.2.2 Distribution Line

All work on the existing distribution line will occur within the Town of Windsor; therefore, the Town of Windsor’s General Plan land use policies are relevant to the impact analysis. However, Sonoma County’s General Plan goals LU-1 through LU-6 (which discourage development outside of existing urban areas) were considered in the environmental impact analysis.

The distribution line along Mitchell Lane is located within the OSZ-A. Along Conde Lane, the line is located within the OSZ-B, according to the Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport *Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan*.

11.3.1.2 Zoning Ordinance Designations

11.3.1.2.1 Substation and Power Line Interconnection

The proposed substation parcel is zoned LI. Allowed uses per the Town of Windsor Zoning Ordinance include, “light industrial and manufacturing, warehousing, offices and assembly uses,” provided those uses do not result in excessive noise or objectionable odors. The land use and zoning designations and existing uses in the immediate vicinity of the proposed substation parcel are shown in the Table 11-1: Existing and Designated Land Uses and Zoning.

Existing Pole (No. 3/11) to be replaced with a TSP along the existing Fulton No. 1 60 kV power line is located adjacent to the residential area to the west of the substation, zoned Surrounding Residential (SR).

Table 11-1: Existing and Designated Land Uses and Zoning

Direction	General Plan Land Use Designation	Zoning Designation	Existing Use
Proposed Substation Site	Light Industrial	Light Industrial	Vacant Site
North	Light Industrial	Light Industrial	Public Park
South	Light Industrial	Light Industrial	Wetland Mitigation
East	Light Industrial	Light Industrial	Vacant Site
West (across train tracks)	Surrounding Residential (3-8 du/ac ¹)	Surrounding Residential (3-8 du/ac)	Detached Residential Units

Source: Windsor Zoning Map, Windsor General Plan Land Use Map

¹du/ac Dwelling Units per Acre

11.3.1.2.2 Distribution Line

The distribution line within the existing Mitchell Lane and Conde Lane rights-of-way is located in an area zoned LI. The remaining portion of the distribution line within the existing Hembree Lane right-of-way is located in an area that does not have a Town of Windsor zoning designation because it is in a narrow strip of land between Hembree Lane and Highway 101.

11.3.2 Existing Land Use

11.3.2.1 Substation and Power Line Interconnection

The proposed substation site, located at 300 Mitchell Lane, is currently undeveloped. It is relatively flat and does not contain natural features or significant vegetation except along the western property line, which is shared with the railroad, where trees and bushes line the railroad tracks. The project site's frontage is developed with a curb, overhead utility lines, (which will be placed underground as a part of the project's distribution line work) and a meandering sidewalk with mature oak trees. The site can be accessed by vehicles through an existing curb-cut and a new driveway that will utilize an existing ramp from Mitchell Lane. Refer to Chapter 4: Aesthetics, for site photographs.

As shown in Table 11-1, the proposed substation site is bordered by vacant industrial land to the east and a wetland mitigation site to the south. The Wilson Ranch Soccer Park is located to the north across Mitchell Lane, as shown in Figure 11-1: General Plan Map. Detached residential units are located approximately 150 feet to the west and are separated from the project site by the existing railroad tracks and a bicycle/recreational pathway. The Fulton No. 1 60 kV power line runs parallel to the railroad tracks, between the railroad tracks and the bicycle/recreational pathway. The power line interconnection work and pole replacement site is located along this alignment. Attachment G includes a list of assessors' parcel numbers (APNs) and the associated mailing addresses and physical addresses of such properties within 300 feet of the proposed substation site.

11.3.2.2 Distribution Line

All of the work activities involving the distribution line will occur within the existing Public Utility Easement (PUE) or in public streets under PG&E's franchise agreement with the Town of Windsor. Along Hembree Lane, the distribution line is located in a landscape strip between Hembree Lane and Highway 101. No additional right-of-way is required for the distribution line. Existing land uses in the immediate vicinity vary and include a public park, industrial buildings, single-family residential homes, and commercial retail. Attachment G includes a list of APNs and the associated mailing addresses and physical addresses of such properties within 300 feet of the distribution line installation.

Figure 11 - 1: General Plan Map

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11.3.3 Recreation

The nearest recreation facilities to the project include a park and a bicycle/recreational path. Wilson Ranch Soccer Park, which contains restrooms, a concession stand, picnic facilities, and overhead field lighting, is located to the north of the proposed substation site across the street. The bicycle/recreation path runs parallel to the west of the existing railroad tracks and electric power line that border the western boundary of the project. A parcel located approximately 0.25 mile south of the proposed substation site is zoned Recreation and Designated Park; however, no park facilities are currently located on the site.

11.3.4 Agriculture

11.3.4.1 Substation and Power Line Interconnection

The proposed substation site is located within the Town of Windsor on a site that is zoned for development. Existing pole (No. 3/11) to be replaced with a TSP along the existing Fulton No. 1 60 kV power line is located adjacent to the developed residential area to the west of the substation. The land proposed for the substation site and power line interconnection replacement TSP site is not currently under cultivation nor is it classified as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance by the California Department of Conservation. Neither site is subject to a Williamson Act contract.

11.3.4.2 Distribution Line

The existing distribution line work will occur on land that is within the PUE or within public streets under PG&E's franchise agreement with the Town of Windsor. The line does not pass through or adjacent to any agriculturally-developed parcels or parcels that are subject to a Williamson Act contract.

11.4 IMPACTS

11.4.1 Significance Criteria

Standards of significance were derived from Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. Impacts to land use may be considered significant if they were to:

- physically divide an established community by creating a permanent barrier by which pedestrian or vehicle access to community features and services would be substantially impaired;
- conflict with an applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect; or
- conflict with an applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

Recreational impacts may be considered significant if they were to:

- increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated; or
- result in the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

Agricultural resources impacts may be considered significant if they were to:

- convert or otherwise result in changes that could result in converting farmland to nonagricultural use; or
- result in a conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or Williamson Act contracts.

11.4.2 Construction

This section has been separated into a temporary impacts section, which is associated with project construction, and a permanent impacts section, which is associated with permanent project impacts from installation of the facility. The analysis of consistency with policies has been included in the permanent impacts section.

11.4.2.1 Land Use

Less-than-significant impacts to land use will occur as a result of construction activities. Construction of the project will not create a barrier within the community as surrounding public streets will remain accessible during construction. During undergrounding activities along Mitchell Lane, the sidewalk immediately adjacent to the proposed substation site will be temporarily closed. However, during the closure, pedestrians will be routed to the sidewalk on the north side of Mitchell Lane, which will remain open for the duration of construction. Sidewalks and curbs that are damaged during construction will be repaired or replaced.

11.4.2.2 Recreation

Because of the short construction duration and limited construction workforce, no additional pressure will be placed on existing recreation facilities nor will there be a need to expand existing facilities. Construction activities will not impede access to the existing soccer park. The bicycle/recreation path to the west of the proposed substation site could temporarily be affected during work activities connecting the proposed substation to the existing power line located immediately adjacent to the path. However, any potential closure would be short-term and pedestrians and cyclists would be routed to alternate public streets and sidewalks in the immediate vicinity for the temporary construction period. Thus, impacts will be less than significant.

11.4.2.3 Agriculture

No temporary impacts to agricultural resources will result from construction activities. The project site and adjacent areas are not under active cultivation nor is the area zoned for agricultural uses.

11.4.3 Operation and Maintenance

11.4.3.1 Land Use

11.4.3.1.1 Substation and Power Line Interconnection

Ongoing operation and maintenance activities will not have land use impacts and will not conflict with local land use regulations or policies. The project will not have permanent on-site employees as the proposed substation will be operated and monitored from PG&E control stations in Vacaville, California. On-site inspections and maintenance will occur monthly. Inspection staff will park on the substation site or will utilize on-street parking spaces, staff vehicles will not impact the public right-of-way or public access. As shown in Table 11-1, the substation site is located in a developed area adjacent to railroad tracks and a mix of residential, light industrial and recreational uses, so the project will not result in barriers that might divide the existing community. In addition, existing public vehicle and pedestrian paths of travel will remain available to the community throughout the life of the proposed substation since the substation will affect only private land on a permanent basis.

Because PG&E is not subject to local zoning ordinances, the proposed substation will not conflict with any local land use plans or policies. Even if those plans and policies were applicable, the proposed substation site, which is zoned LI, is consistent with the Town of Windsor Zoning Ordinance list of allowed uses at the site in that “utility infrastructure” is an allowed use in the LI Zoning District. The LI Zoning District also contains performance standards for new uses and alterations of existing uses. The proposed substation will meet or exceed the performance standards established for the site as demonstrated in Table 11-2: Zoning Development Standards for the Proposed Substation Site.

Table 11-2: Zoning Development Standards for the Proposed Substation Site

Development Standard	Requirement	Project
Front Setback	10 feet minimum	50 feet
Side Setback(s)	None required	50 feet
Rear Setback	10 feet minimum	50 feet
Height	50 feet maximum	42 feet*

Source: Windsor Zoning Ordinance, Section 27.10.040, Table 2-7

*Height is for the substation equipment; power line poles will exceed height indicated.

Although not applicable, the proposed substation is nevertheless consistent with the Land Use Element Goals LU-1 through LU-6 of the Sonoma County General Plan, which discourage growth outside of existing urban areas. The substation is being proposed to increase reliability of the electrical grid to better serve existing development in the Town of Windsor. The proposed substation will not facilitate growth outside the existing limits of the Town of Windsor, but rather accommodates existing development.

The proposed substation is also consistent with applicable airport-related land use regulations. The proposed substation site is located within the Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport Safety Zone, specifically within the OSZ-A, where an electricity substation is an allowed use. The OSZ-A zone allows site coverage of 35 percent; the project proposes site coverage of approximately 20 percent, thus complying with the coverage requirement. There will be no penetration of airspace requiring referral to the FAA (Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 77.13) as the tops of the highest structures, two approximately 95-foot-tall TSPs (top elevation 207 feet), will be well under the 50:1 imaginary approach surface for runway 19 (elevation 258 feet at this location.) However, because of the proximity to the Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport, PG&E has consulted with the Sonoma County Airport Land Use Commission staff who confirmed the project facilities will not conflict with the airport approach surfaces. The project will not interfere or extend into navigable airspace; therefore, no airport-related land use impacts will occur as a result of the project.

Because the Fulton No. 1 60 kV power line is an existing structure, the associated project interconnection work will not result in additional barriers that might divide the existing community.

11.4.3.1.2 Distribution Line

Because the distribution line is an existing structure, the project will not result in additional barriers that might divide the existing community. The undergrounding of the existing distribution line in front of the proposed substation site will remove a visual component from the public right-of-way. In addition, public vehicle and pedestrian paths of travel as they currently exist will remain available to the community throughout the life of the project. Therefore, there will be no impact.

The distribution line is an existing structure and work involving the line will not conflict with any local land use plans or policies, though they are not applicable to the project, as previously described. The existing distribution line is located on lands that are zoned LI or lands that do not have a zoning designation. "Utility infrastructure" is an allowed use in the LI Zoning District. In addition, because the distribution line is an existing structure, the work involving the distribution line does not represent a change to the land use. Therefore, there will be no impact.

As discussed previously, though the Sonoma County General Plan is not applicable, the work involving the existing distribution line is consistent with the Land Use Element Goals LU-1 through LU-6, in that improving the existing distribution line will not encourage growth outside of the Town of Windsor.

The distribution line is also consistent with applicable airport-related land use regulations associated with the Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport Safety Zone. Electrical facilities are an allowed use in OSZ-A and OSZ-B. Poles in OSZ-A and OSZ-B are either being removed or replaced and all replacement poles will be approximately 55 to 65 feet, which is similar to the height of the existing poles and well below the 50:1 imaginary approach surface for runway 19.

Therefore, a referral of the project distribution lines to the FAA is not required because air navigation will not be adversely affected.

Therefore, no airport-related land use impacts will occur as a result of the project.

11.4.3.2 Recreation

No portions of the project are located on land in recreational use or on land zoned for recreational uses. The project will not have permanent on-site employees requiring access to recreation. Adjacent recreational facilities, the bicycle/pedestrian pathway and the Wilson Ranch Soccer Park, will remain available for use by the community throughout the life of the project. The replaced pole along the bicycle path will be set further back from the path than the current pole location. Therefore, no impacts will occur.

11.4.3.3 Agriculture

No portion of the project is located on lands that are under cultivation or zoned for agricultural uses. No portions of the project are located on lands that are currently subject to a Williamson Act contract or classified by the California Department of Conservation as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland.

The areas affected by project facilities are zoned for industrial development or are a part of existing rights-of-way. No portions of the project are located on lands that are currently under cultivation. The zoning designation and land uses in the vicinity do not make this site suitable for agricultural production now or in the future. For these reasons, there will be no impacts.

11.5 AVOIDANCE AND PROTECTION MEASURES

As there will be no significant impacts to land use, recreation, or agricultural resources as a result of the project, no avoidance and protection measures are proposed.

11.6 REFERENCES

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Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department. 2001. Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan for Sonoma County (CALUP).

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