

Introduction

This section describes the affected environment and regulatory setting for public services. It also describes potential impacts on public services, including fire protection and police protection that could result from implementation of the project and mitigation measures to reduce these impacts. Because the proposed project will not result in additional permanent employees for operations or maintenance and it is an existing facility, there will be no increased demand for school services and no impact on schools.

Construction-related impacts on public services include the potential for interference with provision of emergency services and an increased risk of vandalism or terrorist activities associated with the facilities. Potential impacts will be less than significant with implementation of applicant-proposed measures to ensure proper access for emergency service providers and to secure construction areas.

Methodology

Existing conditions were determined from a review of published literature, examination of aerial photographs, personal communication with city and county departments, and site-specific field inspection of the locations of project components.

Affected Environment

Regulatory Setting

No federal, state, or local regulations related to public services apply to the proposed project.

Project Setting

The proposed project includes portions of Monterey County and San Benito County. In San Benito County, the cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista lie in the project vicinity. Details related to the various jurisdictions are outlined below.

San Benito County

Fire Safety

The San Benito County Fire Department (SBCFD) is located at 1979 Fairview Road in Hollister. The Department is contracted with CDF to provide fire protection services for the county. The Department serves the unincorporated portions of the county, including the project vicinity; it does not serve the areas of Hollister or San Juan Bautista, which are discussed in further detail below. SBCFD currently has five staff members contracted by CDF, along with a one-engine response. CDF supplements additional engines on an “as-needed” basis. Maximum response time to the proposed project area would be approximately 10–15 minutes; this is not considered adequate (Dellamonica pers. comm.).

Police Protection

Police protection in unincorporated areas is provided by the San Benito County Sheriff’s Department. The Sheriff’s Department Office is located at 451 Fourth Street in Hollister. Due to the size of the proposed project study area, and the county itself, response times to the proposed project area cannot be adequately estimated. At any time, three to four deputies are on patrol throughout the county; whichever patrol is closest to an incident would be the first to respond. This includes those patrols located in San Juan Bautista and Hollister (discussed in further detail below). (Nino pers. comm.)

City of Hollister

Fire Safety

Fire protection within the city limits is provided by the Hollister Fire Department. The SBCFD provides initial response in certain areas of the city, under an automatic aid agreement between Hollister and the San Benito County; in turn, the City provides initial response in areas protected by the County on the western boundaries of the city.

The Hollister Fire Department is located at 110 Fifth Street; it is staffed by 10 full-time personnel, supplemented by 15 volunteer firefighters. The Hollister

Fire Department has a mutual aid agreement with San Benito County for fire protection in unincorporated areas just beyond the Hollister city limits.

The Hollister Fire Department provides first responder emergency medical services (EMS) and responds to all automatic aid areas as the first responder for EMS incidents. CDF is not automatically dispatched to EMS calls either within their districts or the automatic aid areas but responds only on the request of a law enforcement agency or other fire protection agency.

Police Protection

Police protection within the city limits is provided by the Hollister Police Department. The Hollister Police Department is headquartered at 395 Apollo Court in Hollister. The County Sheriff serves unincorporated areas.

City of San Juan Bautista

Fire Safety

Fire protection in the City of San Juan Bautista is provided by the San Juan Bautista Volunteer Fire Department. Their services are provided through a contractual agreement with the SBCFD to an area extending from Highway 101 on the west to Union Road on the east, and from the San Benito River on the north to the Gabilan Mountains on the south.

The station is located at 311 2nd Street in San Juan Bautista. Equipment includes two fire engines owned by the City, one fire engine owned by the County, and a 2,000-gallon water tender. The Department is staffed by 23 volunteers and provides fire fighting, suppression, and prevention services; emergency medical services; investigations; education; weed abatement; and training.

Maximum response time to calls within the city limits is about 7 minutes; responses to calls outside the city average about 12 minutes—although outlying areas in the hills may take longer to reach. The Department also provides first response to hazardous material incidents but does not provide cleanup or abatement.

Fire protection needs will grow as population grows and will become more complex as new types of development take place in San Juan Bautista. As the City's industrial base becomes larger and more diverse, additional equipment and laborers will be needed. The feasibility of an all-volunteer department will need to be re-examined from time to time. Based on the existing ratio of volunteers to population (one per every 71 city residents), another 25 volunteer fire fighters may be needed by 2015. However, the standard that will be used to evaluate future staffing and equipment needs will be based on response time, with the target of responding to calls within the city limits in 7 minutes or less.

Police Protection

Since the City of San Juan Bautista Police Department was dissolved in 1992, law enforcement services have been provided to San Juan Bautista through a contractual agreement with the San Benito County Sheriff's Office. One full-time deputy is assigned to the city. The deputy uses a small office at the City's corporation yard for administrative purposes, but there is no active police station in the city.

The Sheriff's Office and county jail are located in Hollister. The deputy sheriff is generally on duty for four 10-hour shifts a week. During off-duty periods, law enforcement is provided within the overall County beat structure. Responses to calls in San Juan Bautista are made by the closest patrol available at the time of the call. Response time varies from about 1 minute when the deputy sheriff is on duty to up to 30 minutes during off-duty periods.

Monterey County

Fire Safety

The proposed project will be serviced by the North County Fire Protection District (NCFPD) of Monterey County. NCFPD is a special district detached from County government. (NCFPD 2006).

The District is 164 square miles of predominately rural land with a population of approximately 45,000. Within the boundaries are the communities of Castroville, Moss Landing, Oak Hills, Pajaro, Prunedale, Elkhorn, Las Lomas, and Royal Oaks; four major highways (U.S. Highway 101, SR 156, SR 183, and SR 1); one railway; two rivers (Salinas and Pajaro); 9 miles of beach/water front; and one private airfield. The District is within 15 miles of four major medical facilities (NCFPD 2006).

Within the NCFPD, Station 2 would provide the first response to the proposed project area. Located at 17639 Pesante Road in Prunedale, this station is normally staffed with two firefighters every day—with a maximum amount of three firefighters. Due to the length of the Hollister Tower Segment, there are multiple anticipated response times, ranging from 4.5 to 12 minutes. The closer the incident is to Station 2, the faster the response would be. However, the further the line moves into the pastureland and foothills, the more difficult and extended the response time becomes. The range of response from 4.5 to 8 minutes is considered adequate; a longer response time is not typical and would not be considered adequate. (McCallan pers. comm.)

Fire and emergency medical assistance would vary in the project vicinity based on the type of incident. Generally, one engine is available from Station 2, along with supplemental engines and staff from Aromas and Salinas Fire Departments, which are part of an auto-aid agreement with NCFPD. Examples of how assistance may vary include the following: If a medical aid incident occurred,

one engine would be provided; if a helicopter crash occurred, one engine from Station 2 and one engine from Aromas Fire Department—along with one Fire Department Captain—would be provided; and in the event of a live wire accident, one engine would be provided. (McCallan pers. comm.)

Police Protection

Police protection for the proposed project will be provided by the Monterey County Sheriff's department, located at 1414 Natividad Road in Salinas. Two patrols cars will be nearest to the proposed project alignment in Monterey County. These two cars patrol the area along Crazy Horse Canyon Road, just south of the power line tower—one during the daytime and one during the evening. There are additional beats along the 101 El Camino Real Highway, approximately 1 mile east of the Hollister Tower Segment within Monterey County. These additional patrols are nearest to the areas of Prunedale, Castroville, and Moss Landing; they provide services to the area as needed. Response time to the project area would range from approximately 5 to 10 minutes, 10 minutes being the maximum amount (Parker pers. comm.).

Environmental Effects

This section describes potential impacts of the proposed project relating to public services. It lists the thresholds used to conclude whether an impact is considered significant. Measures to mitigate potentially significant impacts accompany each impact discussion.

Significance Criteria

For this analysis, an impact pertaining to public services 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.):

- Substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:
 - ❑ Fire protection,
 - ❑ Police protection, and
 - ❑ Schools.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

PG&E follows established operations and maintenance procedures for the existing 115 kV power line. These procedures will continue to be implemented for the reconducted segments. Potential impacts related to public services are confined to the construction period because the power line has been in operation in the project area for over 70 years and the proposed project primarily involves modifying existing infrastructure.

Operations of the proposed project will not result in a change to the provision of fire protection, emergency medical services, or police protection. There will be no increase in operation or maintenance employees. Operation will not require any jurisdiction to add emergency staff or facilities to support the project.

During operation, emergency response to the proposed project area will be needed in the event of live wires falling within public areas, or vandalism, as is the case today. As discussed above, the response to the proposed project area will be by the first available emergency unit.

As part of established maintenance procedures, the power line is inspected by a maintenance troubleman, who looks for any vandalism, safety, maintenance, or reliability issues along the alignment. The PG&E protection scheme also detects disturbances on the line. When a disturbance is detected by the relays, the location of the disturbance is identified by the relays and a maintenance troubleman visits the disturbed area to determine the cause of disturbance. On both TSPs and wood poles, the first climbing steps or pegs are located approximately 10–12 feet above the ground to prevent unauthorized structure access from the ground. PG&E will continue to implement the existing protection scheme as a precautionary measure to prevent vandalism to the power line facilities. PG&E will continue to employ maintenance troublemen to inspect the facilities.

Potential for delays to emergency vehicles and changes to emergency response times during construction – less-than-significant impact

Construction may involve temporary lane closures during the approximately 12- to 13-month construction period for each segment. Lane closures have the potential to impede emergency services, increasing response times. Temporary increases in traffic during construction and the presence of construction equipment also may affect response times of emergency vehicles. Additionally, emergencies could occur related to construction worker injury that would require emergency response services.

The current maximum response time to the project area is up to 15 minutes, which is not considered adequate; however, this is an existing condition. In addition, the 15-minute maximum is based on the distance from station locations to the project area. It is likely that emergency staff (including both police and

fire) will be patrolling the unincorporated areas of both counties, as well as the cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista. Therefore, it is more likely that response times to the proposed project area will be less than the 15-minute maximum.

PG&E has existing safety plans in place for construction of this nature and will coordinate with local agencies in the event that required lane closures may impede emergency services.

Potential for increased vandalism or terrorism activities during construction – less-than-significant impact

As noted, the existing risks of vandalism or terrorism activities associated with the 115 kV power line are addressed in PG&E's routine operations and maintenance procedures. Because the potential for vandalism or terrorism activities could increase during construction, the applicant proposes the following measures (APM PUB-1) that are part of routine PG&E construction procedures.

APM PUB-1: MAINTAIN SECURED FACILITIES DURING CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES.

PG&E will implement the following measures during construction activities:

- All equipment will be locked and secured when left unattended at the most secure locations available;
- Contract security will be used at active pull/tension sites, laydown, and storage areas outside work hours;
- All open holes will be covered and secured once activity at that location stops (after hours);
- Anchor bolts on foundations without structures will be capped; and
- Safety structures will be placed at road crossings during overhead wire installation activity to protect traffic and pedestrians.

With implementation of the actions described above, the potential for vandalism or terrorism at construction sites is considered a less-than-significant impact, and no additional mitigation is required.

References

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