

5.17 Utilities and Service Systems

5.17.1 Environmental Setting

Utilities

Water Supply

Merced County does not own or control water rights within the County. There are five major irrigation districts, nine medium-sized irrigation districts or water agencies, and 15 smaller irrigation districts or water agencies that control and manage water resources within the County. Water in the project area is provided by the Merced Irrigation District (Nolte Associates, 2009). Livingston's water comes from 8 groundwater wells distributed through maintained water transmission lines (EPS, 2005).

Merced County depends heavily on groundwater for its water needs. Historical water data show that the use of surface water supplied by the irrigation districts is decreasing during droughts, while the pumping of groundwater for irrigation has been increasing (Nolte Associates, 2009). Groundwater recharge in the project area may become more of an issue as urban areas replace farmlands in Livingston and surrounding towns and areas (EPS, 2005).

Electricity

Electrical services within Merced County are provided by PG&E, Merced Irrigation District, and Turlock Irrigation District (PG&E, 2011).

Natural Gas

Natural gas services within Merced County are provided by PG&E (PG&E, 2011).

Service Systems

Wastewater

Several special districts, including community service districts, water districts, and sanitary districts, provide sanitary sewer service within the unincorporated communities in Merced County. Unincorporated communities that lack sanitary sewer infrastructure are serviced by septic systems (EPS, 2007). Within the project vicinity, Livingston operates its own wastewater collection system and domestic wastewater treatment plant (City of Livingston, 2012a), and wastewater services are provided to the City of Livingston by Environmental Management Services (City of Livingston, 2012b). The community of Cressey relies on septic systems for wastewater treatment (PG&E, 2011).

Stormwater

Some areas of Merced County are exposed to flooding due to periodic heavy rainfall, snowmelt, dam failures, and inadequate storm drainage systems. To prevent flooding in Merced County, the County enforces stormwater and floodplain management practices (Merced Storm Water Group, 2007). Developers are required to provide their own storm drainage systems within subdivisions in most unincorporated communities of the County unless there is a community system in place. With the exception of the community of Hilmar, the County maintains these storm drainage systems (Merced County, 2011).

Polluted stormwater runoff from construction sites often flow to storm sewers and into receiving waters. This runoff can contribute more sediment to receiving waters than can be deposited naturally during

several decades. The resulting situation can cause physical, chemical and biological harm to receiving waters. Merced County has developed a Storm Water Management Program to help address these issues (Merced Storm Water Group, 2007).

The Livingston stormwater system is composed of neighborhood underground collections systems, twelve detention/retention basins, twelve stormwater pump stations, stormwater underground trunk lines, and five discharge points to the Merced Irrigation District (MID). Stormwater is disposed of by percolation, and by discharge to MID laterals and canals (City of Livingston, 2007; MID, 2012). The majority of storm runoff in the City goes through storm basins. A few existing neighborhoods have direct discharge to the canal. Discharge to MID facilities is permitted under Drainage Agreements between MID and the City (City of Livingston, 2007).

Solid Waste Disposal

Merced County does not operate solid waste hauling operations. Solid waste hauling and disposal within the project area is conducted by Winton Disposal/Waste Management (Merced County, 2012a). Livingston waste disposal is conducted by Gilton Waste Management (City of Livingston, 2012c). No transfer stations exist within the County. Waste is collected through drop boxes and curbside collection (Merced County, 2011).

Within the County, there are two active solid waste disposal/landfill facilities owned and operated by the Merced County Regional Waste Management Authority: the Highway 59 Landfill and the Billy Wright Landfill (Merced County, 2012b). The Department of Public Works operates Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facilities at both landfills that collect waste oil, batteries, household pesticides, anti-freeze, electronics wastes, and other household hazardous waste (MCAG, 2012).

Communications

Telecommunication services are primarily provided by SBC/AT&T, with a wide range of other service providers in the market for wireless and long-distance services (PG&E, 2011).

5.17.2 Environmental Impacts and Assessment

UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
a.	Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	Require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.	Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.	Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
f. Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Significance criteria established by CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G.

a. Would the project exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT – CONSTRUCTION. Wastewater services would be provided to the Proposed Project construction workers by portable toilets. Waste would be disposed of at appropriately licensed off-site facilities. Given the limited construction crew, the amount of effluent generated by the crew would not cause wastewater treatment plants to exceed treatment capacity. Impacts would be less than significant.

NO IMPACT – OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE. Operation and maintenance of the project would not generate wastewater; therefore, no impacts would occur.

b. Would the project require, or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT – CONSTRUCTION. Water would be used for dust control, as discussed in Section 5.3 (Air Quality). Water would be obtained from existing supplies and would be sufficient for construction needs. Reclaimed (non-potable) water would be used whenever possible. The project would not require the construction of new or the expansion of existing water facilities. Therefore, there would be no impacts to water or wastewater treatment facilities resulting in the need for new or expanded facilities.

NO IMPACT – OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE. The project would be operated using a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system. Upon completion of construction, no additional operating and maintenance staff would be required, and no additional wastewater would be generated. Existing O&M crews would operate and maintain the new equipment as part of their current O&M activities. Consequently, operation of the Proposed Project would not result in impacts to water or wastewater or require additional facilities.

c. Would the project require, or result in the construction of, new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. Construction of the Proposed Project could temporarily accelerate sedimentation and reduce surface water quality by disturbing the immediate area of the power line route and substations. Stormwater drainage features at the existing substations, along with the construction best management practices (BMPs), would manage project-related stormwater without using off-site facilities. The Proposed Project would not require the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities. Because no new or expanded drainage facilities would be required for the project, this impact would be less than significant.

d. Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the Proposed Project from existing entitlements and resources, or would new or expanded entitlements be needed?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT – CONSTRUCTION. The primary need for water would be construction-related dust control activities and would be dependent upon the activity, season and weather. As described in detail in Section 5.9, Hydrology and Water Quality, water would be trucked from the City of Livingston area as needed. If the project location where water is needed is near an agricultural operation, PG&E may contact the agricultural operation and make arrangements to access their water source, which could be a private groundwater well (PG&E, 2012). Potable water for construction workers would be brought in on construction vehicles. The minimal water needed for dust control and construction crew consumption would not exceed available supplies. Sufficient existing water supplies are available; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

NO IMPACT – OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE. Operation and maintenance would not require additional water supplies and would not result in any impacts.

e. Would the project result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the Proposed Project that it has adequate capacity to serve the Proposed Project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT – CONSTRUCTION. The Proposed Project would require portable toilets for construction workers. Sanitary waste would be disposed of at appropriately licensed official facilities with adequate capacity. Overall, the Proposed Project would generate minimal wastewater during construction. As discussed in Section 5.17.2(a) above, existing wastewater facilities would adequately accommodate the minor demand caused by project construction while serving existing commitments. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

NO IMPACT – OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE. Operation and maintenance activities would not create increased wastewater. No impacts would occur.

f. Would the project be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the Proposed Project's solid waste disposal needs?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT – CONSTRUCTION. Construction debris would be picked up and hauled away as needed for recycling and/or proper disposal. Wood poles would be transported to an appropriate licensed Class I waste disposal facility or the composite lined portion of a solid waste landfill. On average, approximately two cubic yards (CY) of food, glass, paper, plastic, and packing materials would be generated for every month of construction activity. The landfills serving the project area would have adequate capacity for the expected waste: Billy Wright landfill has a remaining capacity of 11,370,000 CY and a daily throughput maximum of 1,500 tons/day as of 2010; Highway 99 landfill has a remaining capacity of 28,025,334 CY and a daily throughput maximum of 1,500 tons/day as of 2005 (CalRecycle, 2012). Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

NO IMPACT – OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE. Operation and maintenance would generate minimal waste, and no impacts are expected to occur.

g. Would the project comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

NO IMPACT. The California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989, which emphasizes resource conservation through reduction, recycling, and reuse of solid waste guide solid waste management requires that localities conduct a Solid Waste Generation Study (SWGS) and develop a Source Reduction Recy-

cling Element (SRRE). The Proposed Project would operate in accordance with these applicable Solid Waste Management Policy Plans by including recycling activities where feasible. As identified in Section 5.17(f) above, the landfill serving the site would have sufficient capacity to accommodate project construction solid waste disposal needs, and project solid waste disposal would not require the need for new or expanded landfill facilities. Therefore, the Proposed Project would comply with federal, State, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste disposal limits and landfill capacities. No impact would occur.

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