

H. Public Participation

H.1 Introduction

This section outlines the scoping and public participation program completed by the CPUC before issuance of the Draft EIR. In the Final EIR, this section will include copies of comments on the Draft EIR and responses to comments.

H.2 Public Participation Program

This section summarizes the CPUC's program of public notice and participation to maximize agency and public input for the Jefferson-Martin 230 kV Transmission Line Project environmental review process.

H.2.1 EIR Scoping Process

The scoping process for the Jefferson-Martin 230 kV Transmission Line Project EIR consisted of the five elements listed below. Each element is described in more detail in the following sections.

1. Publication of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR and Notice of Public Scoping Meetings soliciting comments from affected public agencies, as required by CEQA, as well as from the public.
2. Public scoping meetings and meetings with agencies.
3. Summarization of scoping comments in a Scoping Report.
4. Distribution of the Scoping Report and scoping comments as appropriate to the commenting agencies, scoping meeting attendees, the EIR team members for use in work planning and impact analysis, and to public libraries designated as project repository sites for members of the public interested in reviewing the report and comments.
5. Establishment of an Internet web site, electronic mail address, a telephone hotline, and local EIR Information Repositories.

H.2.1.1 Notice of Preparation

The CPUC issued the NOP on January 20, 2003, and distributed it to the State Clearinghouse and city, county, State and federal agencies, affected state and federal legislators, and local elected officials. There was a 30-day legally required period for interested parties to submit comments regarding the contents of the EIR. This comment period was extended an extra week to February 27, 2003, due to distribution and mailing delays. There were 1,914 copies of the NOP mailed out to members of the public. In addition, the NOP was sent to four federal agencies, 18 State agencies, four county departments, 22 city departments, and 19 special districts. A copy of the NOP is available in the Scoping Report, which may be viewed at the EIR Information Repositories (listed below) and on the Internet, as described in Section H.2.4.

H.2.1.2 Scoping Meetings

Four public scoping meetings were conducted as part of the EIR scoping process to receive input regarding the scope and content of this EIR, as well as alternatives and mitigation measures which should be considered. Approximately 70 members of the public and representatives from organizations and government agencies attended the four scoping meetings. The following scoping meetings were held prior to selection of alternatives to be studied and conduct of the analysis documented in this EIR:

- January 29, 2003, at 7:00 pm at the San Bruno Recreation Center, San Bruno
- February 4, 2003, at 2:00 pm at the City Council Chambers, San Mateo City Hall, San Mateo
- February 4, 2003, at 7:00 pm at the City Council Chambers, San Mateo City Hall, San Mateo
- February 6, 2003, at 7:00 pm at the Albert Teglia Community Center, Daly City.

H.2.1.3 Scoping Report

In April 2003, a comprehensive Scoping Report was issued and 81 copies were distributed, summarizing issues and concerns received from the public and various agencies and presenting copies of all written comments received. Approximately 230 letters and emails were received during the NOP scoping period from public agencies and private citizens. The Scoping Report was made available for review at the 16 repositories and on the Internet as listed in Section H.2.4, and mailed to agencies, parties on the CPUC's Service List, and individuals who requested copies.

The specific issues raised during the public scoping process are summarized below according to the following major themes:

- Human Environment
- Natural Environment
- Purpose and Need
- Alternatives
- Environmental Review and Decision Making Process.

The majority of public comments focused on the potential effect of the project on the human environment, most often expressing concerns with health risks arising from increased EMF emissions, visual and scenic impacts, and impacts to property values. Other common concerns expressed dealt with safety issues, noise, construction impacts, fire risk, interference with communication and electronic equipment, security, conflicts with planned uses, recreation impacts, and quality of life.

- **EMF-Related Health and Safety Issues.** The majority of comments from members of the public and organizations expressed concern over the health effects of the 230 kV transmission line and the EMF it would generate. Many of the comments emphasize the sensitive nature of the residential areas adjacent to the overhead segment due to the large number of family homes, children, schools, and elderly in the area.
- **Visual and Aesthetic Impacts.** The potential visual and aesthetic impacts of the Proposed Project are a major public issue. The primary area of concern is the overhead portion of the transmission line passing along the I-280 corridor, particularly through Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve, along the San Francisco watershed, and alongside residential areas in the San Mateo Highlands and Hillsborough.
- **Impacts to Property Values.** Many of the comments expressed concern regarding the potential impact of the overhead portion of the project on their property values and businesses. Specific topics mentioned in comments included land values, impacts to homes and people's ability to sell their homes, impacts to the neighborhood housing market, and impacts to the tax base.

- **Safety Issues and Fire Risk.** Comments from members of the public, organizations, and government agencies addressed a variety of safety concerns, including effects of earthquakes and landslides on the transmission towers or underground lines. Other concerns included the potential for accidents (electrocution, explosions, or fire), effects on communications, and the potential for asbestos in the serpentine rock being spread by construction activities.
- **Operational Noise Impacts.** Many comments stated that the existing 60 kV overhead transmission line in the southern portion of the project route produces a buzzing or crackling noise audible to nearby residents, particularly during periods of fog or precipitation, and that the proposed overhead 230 kV line would be louder and more disturbing than the existing line. In addition, concerns were also raised about operation noise levels associated with the transition structure and the substations.
- **Construction Impacts.** Commenters discussed the impacts that construction of the project would create to traffic, noise, air pollution, aesthetics, utilities, and health and safety, especially from air pollution, dust, and noise that would be generated by helicopters and heavy equipment. Residents in the northern portion of the route and government agencies discussed the importance of traffic accessibility and expressed concerns over traffic congestion and conflicts with underground utilities such as gas pipelines, water mains, and fiber optic lines, as well as with known leaking underground storage tanks.
- **Interference with Communications and Electronic Equipment.** Comments from many individuals and a number of government agencies expressed concerns with the overhead portion of the project disrupting communications or generating interference with communications or electronic equipment.
- **Security.** A number of individuals noted that as the Proposed Project is designed to improve reliability of the power supply to San Francisco, that security of the line would be enhanced by installing the entire line underground.
- **Conflicts with Planned Land Uses.** A variety of government agencies requested evaluations of potential impacts the project could have on planned land uses, including the City of San Bruno concern over possible conflicts the project may have with the San Bruno Avenue Grade Separation Conceptual Plan, the Linden Grade Separation, the South San Francisco New Station Conceptual Plan, a San Mateo County trailhead parking area, expansion of the County's Juvenile Justice Facilities. The County of San Mateo asked if the project would require an amendment to the San Bruno Mountain Habitat Conservation Plan.
- **Recreation Impacts.** Many of the comments expressed concern over potential effects on the use and quality of recreational areas, including recreational access to San Bruno Mountain, Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve, and Sawyer Camp Trail.
- **Quality of Life.** A few individuals and agencies expressed concerns in their comments about the proposed underground portion negatively affecting the quality of life of residents and students living and going to school nearby the proposed line.

Natural Environment Issues and Concerns

Comments from organizations, individuals, and government agencies addressed issues and concerns with the potential impacts that the project would have on the natural environment, particularly impacts to plants, wildlife, and habitats. Groups including the Committee for Green Foothills, Friends of Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve, Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, San Mateo County Trail Users Group, Town of Woodside, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and the County of San Mateo expressed concern that the project would affect (a) rare, threatened, endangered, and special status plant species, including serpentine assemblages, (b) federal and State protected wildlife species, and (c) sensitive habitats, especially serpentine habitats.

Purpose and Need

Many comments from members of the public questioned the necessity of the project and expressed feelings that PG&E had not provided adequate justification for the project. The 280 Corridor Concerned Citizens and many other individuals indicated that the future demand for electricity in the Bay Area has been overstated, stating that PG&E's forecast is well above historical average recorded growth in peak loads and citing economic declines reducing energy consumption and artificial energy demand generated by power companies. Residents from the San Mateo Highlands and Hillsborough neighborhoods questioned whether the need for electricity in San Francisco is outweighed by the quality of life needs for residents directly affected by the project.

Alternatives

Many comments from individuals and organizations and a number of government agencies suggested a variety of alternatives, including the No Project Alternative, local generation/distributed generation, demand reduction, alternative tower designs, and alternative routes. Specific alternatives issues included (a) requests for careful consideration of the No Project Alternative, (b) discussion of potential new generation in San Francisco, including the Williams turbines, the proposed Potrero Power Plant, renewable energy, and distributed generation, (c) consideration of demand reduction programs, (d) evaluation of alternative tower designs including tubular steel towers, and (e) study of alternative transmission line routes including an all underground route, a partial underground route, and routes west of I-280.

Environmental Review and Decision Making Process

A number of suggestions and comments were made regarding the adequacy of the environmental review and decision-making process. Individuals and agencies addressed issues such as late NOP receipt, potential future expansion of the transmission line, alternatives described in the NOP, need for NEPA compliance, and the CPUC's review process. Other comments stated that without a full evaluation of the justification for the project to be included in the discussion of the No Project Alternative, the EIR would be incomplete.

H.2.2 Public Notification

H.2.2.1 Notification for Scoping Meetings

About a week before the scoping meetings, the NOP was mailed on January 20, 2003, to nearly 2,000 individuals, groups and government agencies identified for the initial EIR mailing list, based on PG&E's list of property owners located within 300 feet of the project facilities, as well as groups and individuals with a vital interest in the Proposed Project compiled by the EIR Team. The dates, times and locations of the four scoping meetings were included in the NOP mailed to these affected agencies and other parties interested in the CPUC's General Proceeding for PG&E's application. This information was also posted on the CPUC's project website and on the project hotline.

A notice for the four public scoping meetings was also published a week before the first meeting in the *San Mateo County Times*, on January 22, 2003.

H.2.2.2 Notice of Release of Draft EIR and Property Owner Notification

A Notice of Release of the Draft EIR will be sent to property owners and occupants on or adjacent to PG&E’s Proposed and the alternative routes in July 2003 at the time the Draft EIR is released. The Notice will include information on how to access the Draft EIR, what is the Environmentally Superior Alternative(s), and the dates, times and locations for informational workshops on the Draft EIR as well as the CPUC’s Public Participation Hearings.

H.2.3 Informational Meetings and Public Hearings

There will be a 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR, ending on August 28, 2003. Following the release of the Draft EIR, three informational workshops will be held in similar locations to the Scoping Meetings (times and dates are below). The purpose of these informational workshops is to help affected communities understand the Proposed Project, the Draft EIR, and how to participate in the CPUC’s decision making processes, including commenting on the Draft EIR. At these informational workshops, the EIR Team and CPUC staff will be available to respond to questions and provide clarification regarding the impact analysis and conclusions presented in the Draft EIR.

There will also be public participation meetings for formal oral comments on the Draft EIR where the public can speak informally on the record on any other issues of concern related to PG&E’s CPCN Application. These Public Participation Hearings (PPHs) will be held by Administrative Law Judge Charlotte TerKeurst; times and dates are below. For more information on the Public Participation Hearings, you may contact the Public Advisor at (866) 849-8390 or public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov.

Following are the locations and dates for informational meetings and hearings:

Informational Workshops	CPUC ALJ Public Participation Hearings
<p>July 29, 2003 5:00 – 9:00 p.m. San Bruno Senior Center 1555 Crystal Springs Avenue, San Bruno</p>	<p>August 12, 2003 2 pm and again at 7:00 p.m. November 18, 2003 2:00 p.m. City Council Chambers, San Mateo City Hall 330 West 20th Avenue, San Mateo</p>
<p>July 31, 2003 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. City Council Chambers, San Mateo City Hall 330 West 20th Avenue, San Mateo</p>	<p>August 14, 2003 2:00 pm and again at 7:00 p.m. November 18, 2003 7:00 p.m. War Memorial Building – San Bruno Recreation Center Meeting Room A/B Crystal Springs Avenue at Oak Avenue, San Bruno</p>

H.2.4 EIR Information and Repository Sites

Placing documents in “repository” sites can be an effective way of providing ongoing information about the project to a large number of people. Therefore, four repository sites in the Proposed Project area were established, and documents are also available at the CPUC in San Francisco. EIR-related documents, including the Scoping Report and the Draft EIR have been made available upon their release to the public at the locations listed below.

John D. Daly Library
6351 Mission Street
Daly City, CA

Serramonte Library
40 Wembly Drive
Daly City, CA

Brisbane Library
250 Visitacion Avenue
Brisbane, CA

Woodside Library
3140 Woodside Road
Woodside, CA

San Bruno Public Library
701 Angus Avenue West
San Bruno, CA

Kinko's Redwood City, Veteran's Blvd*
1111 Veteran's Boulevard
Redwood City, CA

Redwood City Public Library
1044 Middlefield Road
Redwood City, CA

Cupertino Library
10400 Torre Avenue
Cupertino, CA

Cupertino PG&E Office
10900 N. Blaney Avenue
Cupertino, CA

Millbrae Library
1 Library Avenue
Millbrae, CA

Kinko's Colma, 280 Metro Center*
31 Colma Blvd
Colma, CA

Grand Avenue Library
306 Walnut Avenue
South San Francisco, CA

Burlingame Library
480 Primrose Road
Burlingame, CA

West Orange Library
840 West Orange Avenue
South San Francisco, CA

San Mateo Public Library
55 West 3rd Avenue
San Mateo, CA

Kinko's San Mateo, Downtown*
480 E. 4th Avenue, Unit B
San Mateo, CA

*Copies of documents at these locations may be made at the requester's expense.

A telephone hotline for project information has been established at (650) 240-1720. This number receives voice messages and faxes.

EIR information, including Proposed Project information, the Scoping Report, the environmental review process, and the Draft EIR will be posted on the Internet at:

http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/Environment/info/aspen/jefferson_martin/jeffmartin.htm.

This site is used to post all public documents during the environmental review process and to announce upcoming public meetings.

H.3 Public Review Period

In compliance with CEQA Guidelines, the CPUC provides a public review period of 45 days for the Draft EIR. This public review period commences upon release of the Draft EIR, on July 14, 2003, and extends through August 28, 2003. Written comments on the Draft EIR may be submitted at the informational workshops and Public Participation Hearings, via facsimile transmission on the EIR Hotline (650/240-1720), e-mail at the EIR e-mail address (jeffmartin@aspeneg.com), or postal mail at:

Billie Blanchard, Project Manager
California Public Utilities Commission
c/o Aspen Environmental Group
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 935
San Francisco, CA 94104-3002

Written comments must be received or postmarked by August 28, 2003. Please remember to include your name and return address in whatever form you make your written comments. Oral comments will only be received at the CPUC's Public Participation Hearings, in order to ensure an accurate record is made by a court reporter.