

Chapter 17—Cumulative Impacts

17.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses potential cumulative impacts related to the Jefferson-Martin 230 kV Transmission Line project. CEQA and CPUC Rule 17.1 require a discussion of the cumulative effect of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and probable future projects. The project is proposed to increase electrical service reliability in the San Francisco Bay area, and implementation of the project would not result in any permanent cumulative environmental impacts.

17.2 Cumulative Impacts

To determine the potential for cumulative impacts, PG&E contacted planning department staff in the towns/cities of Woodside, San Carlos, Belmont, Burlingame, Millbrae, Hillsborough, South San Francisco, Colma, Daly City, San Bruno, and Brisbane and the County of San Mateo. The planning departments provided the best available information for approved or pending projects within 2 miles of the project route scheduled to occur by 2005 or earlier. PG&E also met with San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Department and SFPUC to discuss projects in the area. A list of probable future projects in the Project area is provided in Appendix A. The projects listed are either approved or pending approval by the local jurisdiction, as indicated in the table, and some are already under construction in the project vicinity. The construction timeframes for many projects have been identified by the local jurisdictions, and those with unknown construction schedules were also considered in this analysis. The projects listed consist of residential or commercial development, infrastructure improvement to local water/sewer utility facilities, public or alternative transportation improvements, and roadway improvements. Other electric power projects or related projects proposed for the area would be considered in accordance with CEQA and CPUC Rule 17.1.

In addition to considering the proposed and future projects as provided by the local planning departments, PG&E took into consideration major projects within the project alignment that have occurred recently, including installation of the BART SFO Extension in or near the Project Segments 2 and 3, as well as on-going improvements to El Camino Real.

17.2.1 Significance Criteria

Consistent with the revised CEQA guidelines (Section 15130), a project could have a significant cumulative impact if a change in the environment resulted from the incremental impact of the Project when added to other closely related past, present, and probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, projects taking place over a period of time.

17.2.2 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

This section analyzes whether the Project, when combined with other proposed projects in the area, would result in either short-term and long-term environmental impacts. Short-term impacts are those related primarily to project construction, and long-term impacts are those related primarily to permanent project features or operation of the project. In the Project Area, short-term construction impacts could include increased traffic, air emissions, and noise. Short-term construction-related impacts are not typically considered significant under CEQA. Long-term impacts could include those related to visual and biological resources.

Future and proposed single-site and linear projects in close proximity to construction of proposed Project could result in cumulative construction-related traffic, noise and air quality impacts, if construction occurs in close proximity and at same time as the proposed Project. BART ROW construction is nearing completion, and would not meet this criteria. Projects in the vicinity of the underground portion of the Project include the proposed bike path along the BART ROW (see Chapter 4, Land Use) and the proposed Hillside Beautification project in Colma .

These two projects have the potential to occur in a similar time frame and could, depending on their timing, contribute to increased traffic disruptions, dust, and noise effects. With implementation of the mitigation measures proposed, such as preparation of a Traffic Management Plan and coordination of work with the responsible local agencies, construction of the Project will not result in any appreciable contribution to traffic congestion or resultant air quality or noise impacts.

The San Mateo-Martin No. 4 Reconductoring Project involves reconductoring of an existing 60kV line that runs from the San Mateo Substation to the Martin Substation. Some towers may require minor steel work such as the replacement of cross members or bracing to the steel structures to comply with CPUC General Order 95 (GO 95). This project would have minimal impacts and is planned for construction in fall of 2003, and is expected to be completed before this Project; no cumulative impacts would result from construction of these two utility projects.

Air Quality

As discussed in Chapter 14, construction and operation of the Project will not result in potentially significant impacts as a result of implementation of BAAQMD guidelines for reduction in PM₁₀ emissions, as well as the other proposed mitigation for temporary air quality impacts. Temporary air emissions would occur as a result of operating construction vehicles and equipment and from PM₁₀ (dust) produced during grading activities. With implementation of BAAQMD guidelines for dust suppression measures to reduce PM₁₀, impacts would be less than significant.

There are no long-term air emissions associated with operation of the project; therefore, no contribution to cumulative impacts would result.

Transportation/Traffic

As discussed in Chapter 11, construction and operation of the Project will not result in any potentially significant transportation or traffic impacts with implementation of proposed mitigation. Most of the area proposed for the underground transmission line is already

developed with residences and commercial business. Several residential, commercial, utility and transportation projects that would use or directly involve local roadways are proposed or approved within 2 miles of the project route. Although other projects are scheduled to take place in the same timeframe as the Project, the incremental contribution of PG&E vehicles using the same roadways to access substation and tower sites would not constitute a considerable contribution to cumulative transportation or traffic impacts. PG&E considered its initial consultation with the local public works departments in determining the preferred route options for the project to avoid planned or proposed roadway improvement projects. Additionally, PG&E will implement a Traffic Management Plan for the Jefferson-Martin project which will involve traffic mitigation measures based on specific roadway conditions related to other projects occurring at the time of construction. There are no long-term transportation or traffic impacts associated with operation of the Project; therefore, no contribution to cumulative impacts would result.

Noise

As discussed in Chapter 15, construction and operation of the Project will not result in any potentially significant noise impacts as a result of proposed mitigation. Temporary noise would occur during construction at the Martin and San Mateo substations and along the underground transmission line. Because proposed development near the San Bruno and the San Mateo substations is planned to consist primarily of residential development or construction of community use facilities, no other significant and permanent noise sources are anticipated, and the Project would not contribute to cumulative noise. Modifications to the substations for the Project would generate low levels of noise during operation that were determined to have no impact.

Taken into consideration with other proposed development the incremental contribution of temporary noise from construction of the Project would not constitute a considerable contribution to cumulative impacts.

Visual Resources

As discussed in Chapter 8, construction and operation of the Project will not result in any significant impacts to visual resources for the overhead transmission line with implementation of mitigation measures incorporated as part of the project. There are no known similar projects proposed in the area of the overhead transmission line that could impact visual resources. The impact to the existing visual landscape of replacing the existing transmission line and modification to the substations and other project facilities for the overhead transmission line was fully analyzed in Chapter 8. Given the presence of the existing 60 kV transmission line, visual changes due to the replacement of that line would have an incremental effect that would not substantially alter the overall visual character of the area. The incremental contribution of the transmission line replacement from the Project would not constitute a considerable contribution to cumulative impacts.

Biological Resources

The overhead portion of the project runs generally through open space lands with little anticipated development. The Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve is analyzing the feasibility of building an Interpretive Center. The most likely location for it would be near the existing Center, in an area of the park that does not support serpentine grasslands and

associated Bay checkerspot butterfly habitat. In the Watershed lands, future modifications to the Crystal Springs Dam spillway and roadway are being considered.

An important on-going impact to the serpentine grasslands and associated BCB habitat is the encroachment by non-native invasive species such as yellow star-thistle; Edgewood Park is currently undertaking a pilot invasive species control program. As discussed in Chapter 6, Biology, PG&E will be coordinating with both Edgewood Park and the Watershed staff in implementation of the proposed control measures. With these measures, the Project will not contribute appreciably to this cumulative impact.

The Project will have a temporary impact on upland habitat in the vicinity of known habitat for San Francisco garter snake and California red-legged frog. With implementation of mitigation measures identified in Chapter 6 for these species, impacts would be less than significant and not contribute appreciably to any cumulative loss of species habitat.