A. INTRODUCTION

A.1 CONTENTS OF THE FINAL EIR

This document constitutes the Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) for the Northeast San Jose Transmission Reinforcement Project (the proposed project) proposed by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E Co.). The Final EIR is organized as follows:

A. Introduction
B. Alternatives Analysis and Final EIR Conclusions
C. Mitigation Monitoring, Compliance, and Reporting Program
D. Public Involvement
E. Responses to Comments on the Draft EIR and Supplemental Draft EIR
F. Changes to the Draft EIR and Supplemental Draft EIR
Appendices: 1: Notice of Release of Supplemental Draft EIR
2: Comments on Draft EIR
3: Comments on Supplemental Draft EIR

CEQA Guidelines (§15132) specify the required contents of a Final EIR. Table A-1 shows how this Final EIR complies with those requirements.

Table A-1 Contents of Final EIR

CEQA Guidelines Requirements (§15132)	Final EIR Contents
(a) The Draft EIR or a revision of the draft.	The Draft EIR and Supplemental Draft EIR are incorporated by reference into this Final EIR, but the bulk of the analysis included in the Draft/Supplemental Draft EIRs will not be re-printed.
(b) Comments and recommendations received on the Draft EIR either verbatim or in summary.	All comments are reproduced in their entirety in Appendix 2 (Draft EIR comments) and Appendix 3 (Supplemental Draft EIR comments).
(c) A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the Draft EIR.	Table E-1 list all persons, organization, and public agencies who commented on the Draft EIR and Supplemental Draft EIR.
(d) The responses of the Lead Agency to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process.	Sections E.1 and E.2 present the responses to all comments on the Draft EIR and Supplemental Draft EIR, respectively.
(e) Any other information added by the Lead Agency.	Final EIR Sections A and B are presented by the CPUC to present additional background information and to reconsider the comparison of alternatives. Section C is provided to document the final Mitigation Measures and the Mitigation Monitoring, Compliance and Reporting Program. Section F describes the changes made to the Draft and Supplemental Draft EIRs.

A.2 PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

This Final EIR has been prepared for the CPUC pursuant to the *California Environmental Quality Act* (Section 21000 et seq. of the California Public Resources Code) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act* (Section 15000 et seq. of the California Code of Regulations). The *Guidelines* stipulate that an EIR must be prepared for any project that may have a significant impact on the environment. The proposal under consideration, the Northeast San Jose Transmission Reinforcement Project, is a "project" as defined by Section 15180 of the *Guidelines*. Upon initial review, the CPUC determined that the proposed project may have a significant adverse impact on the environment and, therefore, the preparation of an EIR was required.

A.3 HISTORY OF CEQA ANALYSIS OF THIS PROJECT

The CEQA analysis of the proposed Northeast San Jose Transmission Reinforcement Project began with issuance of a Notice of Preparation in December of 1999. The Draft EIR was issued in June of 2000 and consisted of approximately 700 pages, including a detailed analysis of impacts in 11 environmental disciplines. Based on its review of comments received on the Draft EIR, the CPUC decided to prepare a Supplemental Draft EIR in order to evaluate additional alternatives and to further examine key environmental issues. Under CEQA (Section 15088.5), a supplemental environmental document is required "…when significant new information is added to the EIR after public notice is given of the availability of the Draft EIR for public review under Section 15087 but before certification."

The Supplemental Draft EIR was issued in October 2000 with a 45-day comment period closing on November 27, 2000. This document included analysis of: (1) new underground transmission line alternatives; (2) a transmission line route avoiding high bird use areas in Milpitas; (3) an assessment of the environmental impacts of the CPUC's required "no cost and low cost" mitigation for electric and magnetic fields (EMF); (4) further discussion of biological resources concerns; and (5) a new alternative substation site.

A summary of public involvement opportunities during the CEQA process is presented in Section D. Comments received on the Draft EIR and the Supplemental Draft EIR are reproduced in this Final EIR (Appendices B and C). Responses to all comments are presented in Section E.

A.4 SUMMARY OF PROPOSED PROJECT AND ALTERNATIVES

The Draft EIR presented detailed analyses of PG&E Co.'s proposed project: a 7.3-mile long 230 kV double-circuit transmission line, a 24-acre substation, connections to the upgraded 115 kV power line system, and a segment of 115 kV line in central San Jose. Section A.4.1 below provides an overview of the proposed project (a more detailed description of the proposed project is presented in Section B of the Draft EIR). As summarized in Section A.4.2.1 below, the Draft EIR analyzed several alternatives to the proposed project, including other 230 kV transmission and 115 kV power line routes as well as other substation sites. The alternatives addressed in the Supplemental DEIR are listed in Section A.4.2.2.

A.4.1 PROPOSED PROJECT

PG&E Co. claims that the Northeast San Jose Transmission Reinforcement Project is needed to meet the projected electricity demand in the Cities of Fremont, Milpitas, San Jose, and Santa Clara (the greater San Jose area). As illustrated in Figure A-1, the proposed project is located within the Cities of Fremont and San Jose, and includes a small, unincorporated area of Santa Clara County. Alternatives to the proposed project are located in the Cities of Milpitas, Fremont, Santa Clara, and San Jose. The four major components of the proposed project are:

- **Los Esteros Substation**: A new 230/115 kV substation located in unincorporated Santa Clara County to provide 230 kV power, which would be transformed to 115 kV power and distributed to existing distribution substations.
- **230kV Transmission Line**: A new 7.3-mile 230 kV double-circuit transmission line connecting the existing 230kV Newark Substation (in the City of Fremont) to the proposed Los Esteros Substation.
- **Newark Substation Modification**: Modification of the existing Newark Substation to accommodate the new 230 kV double-circuit transmission line.
- **115kV Connections and Distribution Line Upgrade:** The Los Esteros Substation would be connected to four existing 115 kV power lines that connect to 115 kV substations (Kifer, Trimble, Montague, and Agnews). Connection to the Montague Substation would require replacement of a segment of an existing 115 kV single-circuit wood pole line with a double-circuit steel pole line along Trimble Road and Montague Expressway (in the City of San Jose).

A.4.2 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The Draft EIR evaluated a set of alternatives to the proposed transmission line routes and substation site originally proposed by PG&E Co. Additional alternatives were evaluated in the Supplemental Draft EIR. All of these alternatives are briefly described below and illustrated on maps in Section B (Figures B-1 and B-2).

A.4.2.1 Draft EIR Alternatives

As a part of the alternatives evaluation process completed during preparation of the Draft EIR, 22 potential alternative routes or methods of providing the required increase in electricity to the region were evaluated (see Draft EIR Section B.5). Of these, 12 alternatives were eliminated because they did not offer significant environmental advantages over the proposed project or because they were not feasible. The 10 alternatives analyzed in the Draft EIR included five transmission line route alternatives, two substation site alternatives, two alternatives to the 115 kV portion of the project, and the No Project Alternative.

230 kV Transmission Line Route

$ **I-880-A Alternative**: This overhead transmission line route would replace the northernmost portion of the proposed route and would avoid most impacts to the Pacific Commons Preserve by crossing it at its eastern edge (near the I-880 Freeway).

- **I-880-B Alternative**: This route would replace the central part of the proposed route, following the eastern edge of the Bayside Business Park closer to the I-880 Freeway rather than the western edge of the business park where the proposed route is located.

$ **Underground Through Business Park Alternative**: In this alternative, the central portion of the proposed route would be installed underground through the business park following PG&E Co.'s existing 115 kV right-of-way (ROW).

- **Westerly Route Alternative**: This complete transmission line route would avoid nearly all developed areas by following PG&E Co.'s existing transmission corridor through parts of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge and other open spaces.

- **Westerly Route Upgrade Alternative:** Following the same route as the Westerly Route above, this alternative involves a different electrical configuration in which the two existing 115kV double-circuit lines would be removed and two new 230kV double-circuit lines would be installed.

230 kV Substation Site

The Draft EIR evaluated two alternatives to the proposed Los Esteros 230 kV substation site:

- **Northern Receiving Station site**: This site, located in the City of Santa Clara, has been approved by the City for use as a 115kV substation and could accommodate both facilities.

- **Zanker Road Substation site**: Located just south of State Route 237 on the east side of Zanker Road, this site could also accommodate the substation.

115 kV Trimble-Montague Upgrade

The Draft EIR evaluated two alternatives to the proposed 115kV Trimble-Montague Upgrade:

$ **Underground Trimble-Montague Alternative:** This alternative would involve an underground 115kV line using the same ROW as the proposed above ground upgrade.

$ **Barber Lane Alternative:** This alternative, while one mile longer than the proposed 115kV upgrade, would avoid the busy streets of Trimble Road and Montague Expressway.

No Project Alternative

In addition to the alternatives described above, the No Project Alternative was evaluated in each environmental issue area. The No Project Alternative addresses the impacts of the actions that would occur if the proposed project were not constructed. In this scenario, the demand for electrical service in San Jose, Fremont, Milpitas, and Santa Clara would continue to grow and either the electricity would be supplied by other means or electrical service quality and reliability would quickly decline.

A.4.2.2 Supplemental Draft EIR Alternatives

The Supplemental Draft EIR included analysis of six new or revised alternatives: five potential modifications to the 230kV transmission line route and one new substation site alternative.

Figure A-1 Proposed Project page 1 of 2
b/w 8.5 x 11

Figure A-1 page 2 of 2

230 kV Transmission Line

- **Northern Underground Alternative**: Similar to the I-880-A Alternative evaluated in the Draft EIR, this route would pass through the eastern edge of the Pacific Commons Preserve.
- **Modified I-880-A Alternative:** A modification of the I-880-A Alternative evaluated in the Draft EIR, this route was suggested by PG&E Co. and was intended to reduce the bird collision and visual impacts of the portion of the I-880-A Alternative crossing the salt ponds.
- **Modified I-880-B Alternative**: A modification of the I-880-B Alternative that was evaluated in the Draft EIR, this route was designed to accommodate land use changes in the Fremont business park area.
- **McCarthy Boulevard Alternative Segment**: This route would pass through Milpitas, south of Dixon Landing Road, and then cross Coyote Creek to re-join the proposed route.
- **Southern Underground Alternative:** An underground transmission line route through Milpitas and crossing Coyote Creek to the proposed substation site.

Substation Site

- **US DataPort Substation Alternative**: A substation site adjacent to and northwest of the proposed substation site.

A.4.2.3 Final EIR Alternatives

This Final EIR evaluates modifications to several previously analyzed alternatives and reassesses the comparison of these alternatives in light of comments received on the Supplemental Draft EIR (comment letters are reproduced in Appendix 3). The analysis is presented in Section B.

A.5 CPUC DECISION PROCESS

The CPUC's General Proceeding, of which CEQA compliance is only one part, started when PG&E Co. submitted its application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) in September of 1999 (A.99-09-029). In this proceeding, the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ; currently Sarah R. Thomas) and the Assigned Commissioner (Henry L. Duque) have held hearings and listened to testimony of parties with an interest in the case. These hearings and testimony took place in August and early September of 2000. At their conclusion, and after issuance of the Final EIR, the ALJ and the Assigned Commissioner will draft a Proposed Decision addressing several key issues, including: (1) the need for the proposed project; (2) whether this EIR (including the Draft EIR and Supplemental Draft EIR) should be certified as adequate under CEQA ("EIR certification"); and (3) whether the project as proposed, or with alternatives as analyzed in the EIR, should be approved by the CPUC, and if so, with what conditions or mitigation measures.

The proposed Decision on the project will be submitted to the entire five-member Commission and the Commission will vote on the project during a public meeting. This CPUC meeting and Decision are expected to take place in early to mid-2001. The CPUC's Internet Home Page lists Commission meeting agendas: http://www.cpuc.ca.gov.

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