

RELEVANT SANTA CRUZ COUNTY GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

Public utility facilities regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) are, in general, not subject to local land use and zoning regulations. However, consistent with CPUC jurisdiction over public utility facilities, the following Santa Cruz County General Plan policies would be relevant to the proposed project, and Pacific Gas & Electric would consider them in the final design, construction, and operation of the proposed project.

OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Land Use Element

- **Objective 2.21: Public Facility/Institutional Designation.** To ensure adequate present and future availability of land for both public and quasi-public facility uses including schools and University facilities, fire stations, churches, hospitals, cemeteries, sanitary landfills, and water supply and treatment facilities.
 - **Policy 2.21.4: Location of Public Utility Transmission Facilities.** Public utility transmission and distribution facilities, including substations, shall be allowed in all land use districts, provided, however, that the routes or site plans of all proposed gas and electric transmission lines and substations shall be submitted to the Planning Department for review and recommendations prior to the acquisition of necessary land rights. No discretionary permit shall be required for a proposed land use which is subject to the jurisdiction of the California Public Utilities Commission or the California Energy Commission.

Conservation and Open Space Element

- **Objective 5.10a: Protection of Visual Resources.** To identify, protect, and restore the aesthetic values of visual resources.
- **Objective 5.10b: New Development in Visual Resource Areas.** To ensure that new development is appropriately designed and constructed to have minimal to no adverse impact upon identified visual resources.
 - **Policy 5.10.3: Protection of Public Vistas.** Protect significant public vistas as described in Policy 5.10.2 from all publicly used roads and vista points by minimizing disruption of landform and aesthetic character caused by grading operations, timber harvests, utility wires and poles, signs, inappropriate landscaping, and structure design. Provide necessary landscaping to screen development which is unavoidably sited within these vistas.
 - **Policy 5.10.23: Transmission Lines and Facilities.** Require transmission line rights-of-way and facilities to be reviewed in accordance with the Zoning

Ordinance to minimize impacts on significant public vistas; especially in scenic rural areas, and to avoid locations which are on or near sensitive habitat, recreational, or archaeological resources, wherever feasible.

- ***Policy 5.10.24: Utility Service Lines.*** Require underground placement of all new utility service lines and extension lines to and within new residential and commercial subdivisions. Require underground placement of all other new or supplementary transmission lines within views from scenic roads where it is technically feasible, unless it can be shown that other alternatives are less environmentally damaging or would have unavoidable adverse impacts on agricultural operations. When underground utilities are installed parallel to existing above ground lines, require that the design of the support towers or poles be compatible with the surroundings and that lines cross roadways at low elevations or curves in the roads in accordance with the California Public Utilities Commission regulations for public utility facilities.
- ***Policy 5.10.25: Access Roads for Transmission Lines.*** Require access roads for transmission line construction and maintenance within scenic corridors to be designed and constructed to parallel the contour of the land and to minimize grading and landscape alterations.

Public Safety and Noise Element

- ***Objective 6.4: Flood Hazards.*** To protect new and existing structures from flood hazards in order to minimize economic damages and threats to public health and safety, and to prevent adverse impacts on floodplains, and maintain their beneficial function for flood water storage and transport and for biotic resource protection.
 - ***Policy 6.4.4: Locate Public Facilities Outside Flood Hazard Areas.*** Require new utilities, critical facilities, and non-essential public structures to be located outside the 100-year flood and coastal high hazards areas, unless such facilities are necessary to serve existing uses, there is no other feasible location, and construction of these structures will not increase hazards to life or property within or adjacent to the floodplain or coastal inundation areas.
- ***Objective 6.5: Fire Hazards.*** To protect the public from the hazards of fire through citizen awareness, mitigating the risks of fire, responsible fire protection planning, and built-in systems for fire detection and suppression.
 - ***Policy 6.5.8: Public Facilities within Critical Fire Hazard Areas.*** Discourage location of public facilities and critical utilities in Critical Fire Hazard Areas. When unavoidable, special precautions shall be taken to ensure the safety and uninterrupted operation of these facilities.
- ***Objective 6.8a: Electric and Magnetic Energy.*** To protect the public from potential health hazards associated with electric and magnetic fields based on the then current state of scientific knowledge through appropriate limitations on the use and development of land near electric transmission and distribution powerlines and substations which could create health hazards.

- **Objective 6.8b: New Electrical Facilities.** The planning, siting, and construction of future electrical facilities should minimize electric and magnetic fields near sensitive areas (for example schools, hospitals, playgrounds), residential uses, existing areas of high electric and magnetic exposure, and areas of future development.
 - **Policy 6.8.1: Prudent Avoidance.** In regard to exposure of electric and magnetic fields, the policy of the County of Santa Cruz is one of “prudent avoidance.” Prudent avoidance assumes that exposure to electric and magnetic fields may present a health risk. The policies in this section shall apply to residential land divisions or other new discretionary development and other sensitive land uses, not including development of one single-family dwelling on an existing lot of records.
 - **Policy 6.8.3: Development Mitigation Measures.** Utilize the following techniques to minimize exposure to potentially hazardous electric and magnetic fields from electric powerlines.
 - a. *Site Planning*—Locate and/or cluster habitable building envelopes away from the potentially hazardous electric and magnetic fields consistent with the current state of scientific knowledge.
 - b. *Underground the Powerline*—Reduce the electric and magnetic fields by undergrounding powerlines in a metallic pipe or other appropriate insulator.
 - c. *Reconfigure the Powerline*—Reconfigure powerlines and conductors in transmission or distribution lines to achieve significant cancellation of the electric and magnetic fields near the ground.
 - **Policy 6.8.4: New Transmission and Distribution Facilities.** The siting of new transmission and distribution powerlines and substations shall minimize electric and magnetic fields near existing sensitive areas, residential areas, existing areas of high electric and magnetic field exposure, and areas of future development. Public exposure to electric and magnetic fields shall not be increased where practical alternatives exist.

Parks, Recreation, and Public Facilities Element

- **Objective 7.26: Electrical Distribution System.** To improve the reliability and aesthetic quality of the electrical energy distribution system in order to promote public health and safety, environmental protection, and resource conservation in the operation of existing or new energy production or distribution systems.
 - **Policy 7.26.1: Undergrounding Lines.** Require all new power line distribution systems and all services to new development to be placed underground.
 - **Policy 7.26.2: Protecting Scenic Quality.** Discourage new high-voltage overhead transmission line corridors that impinge upon the scenic quality of the County and may pose a health hazard. Consider placing existing transmission lines underground.

APPENDIX C

- ***Policy 7.26.3: Recreational Use of Utility Rights-of-Way.*** Encourage the use of utility rights-of-way for bikeways and hiking paths where appropriately located and where shown to be not hazardous to users.
- ***Policy 7.26.5: Criteria for LCP Amendments for Energy Facilities.*** Establish the following criteria for amendments to the General Plan and LCP Land Use Plan for permitting the location of energy facilities in addition to stated LCP policies:
 - Adequate infrastructure and public services are available including, but not limited to, water, sewer, fire protection, road capacity, law enforcement, and medical services.
 - The use would provide full protection of sensitive habitat areas, commercial fishing, recreational, and agricultural uses.
 - The use would be visually compatible with and have minimum disruption of viewsheds.
 - Consistency with federal, state, and local air quality regulations.