4.6 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Consideration of potential transportation and circulation impacts that may result from the project primarily involves determining whether a net change would occur in traffic generated by personnel commuting to or from the affected facilities or by vehicle trips related to plant operations. The project, the divestiture of properties by PG&E, could lead to increased operations and increased on-site employment levels. These factors could incrementally increase transportation and circulation.

4.6.1 LOCAL SETTING

POTRERO POWER PLANT

Access to the Potrero Power Plant is provided by Illinois Street, a local serving roadway that connects directly to Third Street (a six-lane, north-south arterial) via 22nd or 23rd Streets, and indirectly to U.S. 101 via Cesar Chavez Street (six-lane, east-west arterial).

CONTRA COSTA POWER PLANT

Access to the Contra Costa Power Plant is provided via Wilbur Avenue (two- to four-lane, east-west arterial) that connects directly to State Route (SR) 160 and indirectly to SR 4.

PITTSBURG POWER PLANT

Access to the Pittsburg Power Plant is provided via Willow Pass Road / West 10th Street (two- to four-lane, east-west arterials) that connect indirectly to SR 4 via Railroad Avenue (four-lane, north-south arterial).

GEYSERS POWER PLANT

The Geysers Power Plant is located in a remote section of Sonoma and Lake Counties, accessible only by two-lane roadways. From the west, the Geysers Power Plant is accessed via Geysers Road, which extends west to U.S. 101 at Healdsburg (via SR 128, Alexander Valley Road, Healdsburg Avenue, and Dry Creek Road), and near Cloverdale. From the east, the Geysers Power Plant is accessed via Sawmill Flat Road (private road), which extends east to SR 175 near Pine Grove, and Socrates Mine Road, which extends east to SR 175 near Anderson Springs.

Internal circulation providing access to the PG&E units within the Geysers area is available via a number of two-lane private roadways, including Big Geysers Road, Big Sulphur Creek Road, J.D. Kincade Road, Burned Mountain Road, Big Geysers Road, Squaw Creek Road, Ottoboni Ridge Road, Lakeview Road, DX Drive, and Airstrip Road. In the Geysers area, truck travel on the access roads is restricted during commute hours.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

Existing traffic volumes on public roadways serving the power plant sites are presented in Table 4.6-1.

4.6.2 SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines (Governor's Office, 1997), a project may be deemed to have a significant effect on the environment if it would cause an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system. In addition, Appendix I of the CEQA Guidelines indicates that a project may result in a significant impact on the environment if it would result in hazards to safety from design features or incompatible uses; inadequate emergency access or access to nearby uses; or insufficient parking capacity on site or off site.

4.6.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact 4.6-1: The project could increase traffic generation. (Less than Significant)

The project would not directly generate additional traffic to or from the affected sites, and therefore no direct project impacts would occur.

The project could generate some additional traffic to or from the affected sites if new owners were to increase electrical output from the power plants. With increased electrical generation, an increase in employment could occur. Such an increase in employment, however, would not be in direct proportion to the increase in power, and because the number of employees at each plant is relatively low compared to other possible land uses, traffic increases would not be substantial. In the Geysers area, truck travel on the Geysers access roads would continue to be restricted during commute hours.

Since possible traffic increases would be negligible in comparison to existing traffic volumes and the capacity on the roadways providing access for the sites, traffic impacts would be less than significant.

Impacts of the project on road wear also would be insignificant. Within the Geysers area, the private roadways are maintained by Unocal. Since the funding of internal roadway maintenance costs would be included in the sale of the Geysers plant, the subsequent Geysers Power Plant owner would pay a fee towards any maintenance of these roadways. Therefore, potential impacts to maintenance of these roadways would be mitigated.

Mitigation Measures Proposed as Part of Project

None.

TABLE 4.6-1

EXISTING DAILY TRAFFIC VOLUMES ON PROJECT AREA ROADWAYS

Roadway	Location	Existing Daily Traffic Volumes
San Francisco		
Cesar Chavez Street	east of U.S. 101	32,000
Interstate 280	south of Cesar Chavez Street	80,000
U.S. 101	south of Cesar Chavez Street	256,000
Contra Costa County		
Wilbur Avenue	west of Santa Fe Railroad Spur	6,370
State Route 4	west of SR 160	31,000
State Route 160	north of Wilbur Avenue	9,900
City of Pittsburg		
West 10th Street	west of Railroad Avenue	4,300
Railroad Avenue	north of SR 4	34,600
State Route 4	west of Railroad Avenue	80,000
Lake County		
Socrates Mine Road	west of SR 175	1,020
State Route 175	near Socrates Mine Road	2,100
Sonoma County		
Cloverdale-Geysers Road	east of Pine Mountain Road	245
Healdsburg-Geysers Road	north of Red Winery Road	425
Alexander Valley Road	west of SR 128	3,945
State Route 128	north of Alexander Road	1,700
U.S. 101	north of Cloverdale	9,100
City of Healdsburg		
Healdsburg Avenue	north of Dry Creek Road	9,720
Dry Creek Road	east of U.S. 101	14,550
U.S. 101	south of Dry Creek Road	27,500

SOURCE: San Francisco Department of Parking and Traffic, 1995-96 24-hour counts; City of Pittsburg Department of Public Works, traffic flow map; City of Healdsburg Department of Public Works, 1998 24-hour counts; Contra Costa County Department of Public Works, 1994 24-hour count; Lake County Department of Public Works, 1997 24-hour counts; Sonoma County Department of Public Works, 1992-94 24-hour counts; and Caltrans, 1997 Annual Average Daily Traffic Volumes.

Mitigation Measures Identified in this Report

None required.

Impact 4.6-2: The potential minor increases in traffic would not increase traffic safety hazards. (Less than Significant)

No change in roadway design or safety hazards would result from the divestiture of PG&E power plants. Continued operation of the power plants at the affected sites would ensure that there is no change in compatibility with neighboring uses. No new facilities are proposed that would increase traffic hazards or create barriers for pedestrians or bicyclists.

Because the project would not alter traffic design features, would not create incompatible traffic patterns, would not affect pedestrian or bicycle facilities or the potential hazards of using such facilities, the impact associated with traffic hazards, including pedestrian and bicycle hazards, would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures Proposed as Part of Project

None.

Mitigation Measures Identified in this Report

None required.

Impact 4.6-3: The potential minor increases in traffic from the project would not have an effect on emergency access and access to nearby land uses. (Less than Significant)

Continued operation of the power plants at the affected sites would not change access for emergency vehicles or access to nearby uses. No facilities are specifically proposed as part of the project that would change emergency access at any plant or that would affect access to nearby uses. PG&E would ensure that it maintains access to portions of the power plant sites not to be divested, through conditions in the sale agreements with new owners or through other means.

Because neither a change in emergency access nor access to nearby uses would occur as a result of the project, the impact associated with vehicle access would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures Proposed as Part of Project

None.

Mitigation Measures Identified in this Report

None required.

Impact 4.6-4: The project could increase demand for on-site parking. (Less than Significant)

As discussed in this section, the project could indirectly result in incremental increases in employment levels at some of the plants to be divested if the electrical generation at any of the plants were to increase. There is sufficient parking on-site capacity at the plants to accommodate potential increases in parking demand.

Because on-site parking capacity at the plant sites would accommodate the potential increases in employment at the affected project sites, the impact associated would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures Proposed as Part of Project

None.

Mitigation Measures Identified in this Report

None required.

REFERENCES – Transportation and Circulation

Governor's Office of Planning and Research, *CEQA Statutes and Guidelines*, 1997.