

## 4.11 Land Use and Planning

### 4.11.1 Introduction

This section describes the setting and potential impacts of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives related to land use and planning. Under CEQA, land use and planning generally refers to existing land uses and land use plans, and significance criteria relate to the potential for a project to physically divide an existing community or conflict substantially with an existing land use plan or regulation.

### 4.11.2 Regulatory Setting

#### Federal Laws, Regulations, and Policies

No federal plans or policies related to land use or planning apply to the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, or alternatives.

#### State Laws, Regulations, and Policies

##### *California Public Utilities Commission General Order 131-D*

The CPUC has exclusive jurisdiction over the siting and design of power line projects and substations; therefore, the Proposed Project and alternatives are exempt from local land use and zoning regulations. However, CPUC G.O. 131-D states that in locating a project, the public utilities shall consult with the local agencies regarding land use matters. Local laws, regulations, plans, and policies are described in detail in Appendix A of this DEIR.

### 4.11.3 Environmental Setting

#### Regional Setting

The Proposed Project and reasonably foreseeable distribution components would be located within the City of Paso Robles and unincorporated areas of northern San Luis Obispo County (within the El Pomar-Estrella and Salinas River sub-areas of the North County planning area). Portions of the Proposed Project and reasonably foreseeable distribution components also fall within the Paso Robles Municipal Airport Review Area. The majority of the alternatives under consideration would occur in the same general area, although several alternatives would be located within or near the communities of Templeton (Alternative SE-1A, SE-PLR-2, and BS-2 [example FTM Site 6]) and San Miguel (example FTM Site 8) and the City of Atascadero (example FTM Site 7). The predominant land uses within the vicinity of Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives sites include agriculture, open space, rural residential, residential, commercial, and industrial.

## Existing Land Uses

### *Proposed Project*

The proposed Estrella Substation site is located on the northwest side of Union Road, approximately 1.5 miles south of SR 46, in unincorporated San Luis Obispo County. The substation would be constructed on an approximately 15-acre site, carved out of a 98-acre parcel of land designated as agriculture and currently being used as a vineyard (one of five contiguous parcels operated by Steinbeck Vineyards & Winery). The proposed substation site is surrounded on all sides by agricultural uses (vineyards, dry farming, and grazing). PG&E's existing 230-kV double-circuit transmission line and 500-kV transmission line traverse the agricultural area north of the proposed substation site on two sets of lattice steel towers. One residence is located in the southwestern portion of the 98-acre parcel, and another residence is located approximately 1,000 feet to the east. Dry Creek is located approximately 1,500 feet to the north of the site.

The proposed new 70 kV power line segment would extend from the proposed Estrella Substation site in a generally northwesterly direction for approximately 7 miles until it reaches the existing San Miguel-Paso Robles 70 kV power line, located on the east side of US 101 and the Salinas River. The majority of the new 70 kV power line would be constructed on agricultural land consisting of vineyards, orchards, grazing areas, and other agricultural lands, with some portions of the line extending through lands with existing residential rural and suburban, commercial, and industrial uses. The general nature of the existing land uses along the proposed 70 kV power line is shown in the aerial photography included in Figure 2-7 in Chapter 2, *Project Description*.

From the proposed Estrella Substation site, the proposed 70 kV power line would cross through vineyards on the north side of Union Road for approximately 1.5 miles before traversing through rural residential and agricultural lands, crossing Huer Huero Creek, and then following Union Road for roughly 1.1 miles until the junction with Paso Robles Boulevard/SR 46. In following this portion of Union Road, the proposed 70 kV power line would pass by undeveloped/open space lands, rural residential lands, and Barney Schwartz Park and the Paso Robles Sports Club. South of Union Road in this area is the northern edge of land designated as residential suburban as part of the North Chandler Ranch Specific Plan. After crossing over SR 46, the proposed 70 kV power line continues north/northwest for approximately 1.5 miles through agricultural, industrial, commercial, public open space, and residential land uses. The area north of SR 46 in this area is known as the Golden Hill Industrial Park and includes several wine processing facilities and other industrial and commercial uses. Adjacent to Golden Hill Road and the proposed 70 kV power line alignment north of San Antonio Winery is Cava Robles RV Resort and single-family homes making up the Circle B Springs HOA.

Where Golden Hill Road terminates and turns into Lake Place, the proposed power line would continue north through open space and agriculture lands before turning 90 degrees to the west. From this point, the power line alignment would continue roughly 2 miles through largely agricultural lands before meeting the existing San Miguel-Paso Robles 70 kV power line. The River Oaks Hot Springs Spa is located near the junction of the proposed new 70 kV power line segment and the existing San Miguel-Paso Robles 70 kV power line. From the junction point to the south, the existing power line would be reconductored for approximately 3 miles to the

point where the existing power line meets the Paso Robles Substation. The existing San Miguel-Paso Robles 70 kV power line generally follows North River Road, which is adjacent to the Salinas River, but also cuts through several residential areas of Paso Robles. At the point where the existing power line meets Paso Robles Substation, residential development gives way to commercial uses, including several large stores and shopping centers on either side of Niblick Road.

### ***Reasonably Foreseeable Distribution Components***

The reasonably foreseeable distribution line segments would be installed primarily in agricultural areas and within existing road right-of-way. As shown in Figure 2-10 in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, the southern new distribution line segment would follow an existing dirt road through agricultural fields north from the proposed Estrella Substation to the junction with Mill Road. The northern reasonably foreseeable new distribution line segment would follow SR 46 (within the roadway median) in a northeast direction before turning north and traversing an agricultural field. The three additional 21/12 kV pad-mounted transformers would be installed along roadways in agricultural and undeveloped areas (see Figure 2-10).

### ***Alternatives***

The majority of the alternatives under consideration are located in more rural areas of San Luis Obispo County relative to the Proposed Project components. The Bonel Ranch Substation Site (Alternative SS-1) is located on an agricultural parcel along Estrella Road currently being used to grow alfalfa that is surrounded by additional agricultural lands and open space. Similarly, the Templeton Substation Expansion Site (Alternative SE-1A) is located on agricultural land adjacent to the existing Templeton Substation and surrounded by largely agricultural, rural residential, and open space lands.

Of the power line routing alternatives, Alternatives PLR-1A and PLR-1C would both pass through primarily agricultural lands in rural areas north of the City of Paso Robles, although the reconductoring segments of these alternatives would pass through the same residential/urban areas of Paso Robles as the Proposed Project's 70 kV power line route. The Templeton-Paso South River Road Route (Alternative SE-PLR-2) would pass through agricultural lands and rural residential areas that make up the Santa Ysabel HOA. The last 0.6 mile of the Alternative SE-PLR-2 route north of the intersection of South River Road and Charolais Road would pass through denser residential development as well as commercial land uses. Alternative PLR-3 (both options) would underground the portion of the proposed 70 kV power line that passes through the Golden Hill Industrial Park and areas adjacent to Cava Robles RV Resort and Circle B HOA.

With respect to Alternative BS-2, the example FTM Sites 1-4 would be located in the City of Paso Robles near Paso Robles Substation, where surrounding land uses are primarily commercial and residential, as well as public facilities (the example FTM Site 4 is located adjacent to Paso Robles High School). FTM Site 5 is located adjacent to the CAL FIRE Air Attack Base within an undeveloped parcel, but adjacent to a planned solar generation facility. The example FTM Sites 6 and 8 are located adjacent to the Templeton and San Miguel substations, respectively, which are located in relatively rural areas. FTM Site 7 is adjacent to Atascadero Substation within the City of Atascadero where surrounding land uses are primarily residential, although the Cornerstone Community Church is adjacent to the site to the south. As indicated in Chapter 3,

*Alternatives Description*, the example FTM sites are provided for illustrative purposes in this DEIR.

## **Land Use Designations, County Combining Designations, Airport Land Use Compatibility, and Zoning**

Land use designations for the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives areas generally reflect the existing land uses described above. As shown in Figure 4.11-1, the vast majority of unincorporated county lands within which the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, or alternatives would be located are designated for agricultural use in the San Luis Obispo County General Plan (with the exception of areas in the Alternative SE-PLR-2 area, which are designated for rural residential use). The land use designations within the City of Paso Robles where the Proposed Project and alternatives would be located include Residential Suburban (RS), Commercial Service (CS), Agriculture (AG), Public Open Space (POS), Business Park (BP), Residential Single Family (RSF), Residential Multiple Family (RMF), Public Facilities (PF), and Regional Commercial (RC).<sup>1</sup>

In addition to land use designations, the County of San Luis Obispo also identifies combining designations, which are special overlay categories applied in areas of the county with hazardous conditions or special resources. County combining designations in the vicinity of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives sites include Airport Review (AR)<sup>2</sup>, Flood Hazard (FH), Extractive Resource Area (EX1), and Renewable Energy (RE). As shown in Figure 4.11-2, portions of the proposed new 70 kV power line segment are within the AR combining designation, whereas the proposed Estrella Substation and 70 kV power line reconductoring segment are just outside of the AR boundaries. Much of the lengths of Alternatives PLR-1A and PLR-1C are within the AR combining designation. The FH combining designation is the same as the FEMA flood zones (includes both the 1 percent annual chance and 0.2 percent annual chance flood hazard areas) shown on Figure 4.10-2 in Section 4.10, "Hydrology and Water Quality." Neither the Proposed Project nor the reasonably foreseeable distribution components or any of the alternatives are located within an EX1 combining designation. The proposed Estrella Substation site, portions of the proposed 70 kV power line alignment, and many of the alternatives are located within the RE combining designation (areas

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the San Luis Obispo County Land Use Ordinance incorporates the Land Use Element land use categories, combining designations, and the official maps. It contains the procedures for various permit processes for the review and approval of proposed land uses and divisions, including provisions for public review of such decisions and opportunities for appeal. It requires that all new or altered uses be consistent with the Land Use Element, eliminating the need for the traditional system of separate zoning maps (San Luis Obispo County 2015).

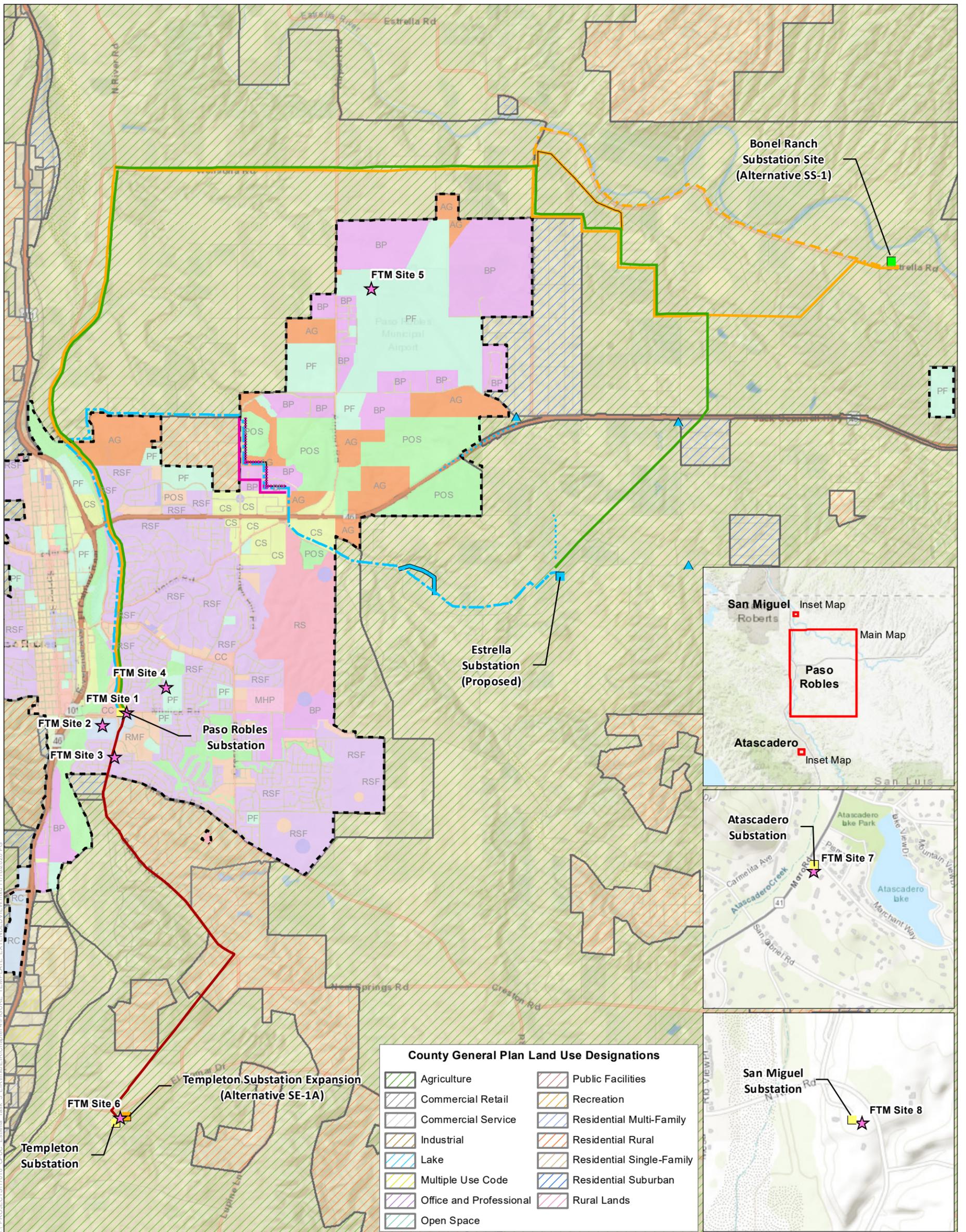
<sup>2</sup> The Airport Review designation allows San Luis Obispo County the ability to implement Federal Aviation Administration regulations by allowing only those land uses which would not generate hazards or obstructions to aircraft operations in the vicinity of an airport. Hazards which must be avoided include excessive height of buildings and structures; electrical interference with radio communications; glare from night lighting which could impair the ability of flyers to distinguish airport lights from others; and glare in the eyes of flyers from reflective building surfaces (San Luis Obispo County 2015).

in the county where renewable energy resource developments are favorable and prioritized), as shown on Figure 4.11-2.

Figure 4.11-3 shows the airport safety zones identified in the ALUP for the Paso Robles Municipal Airport. As described in Appendix A (see under “Hazards and Hazardous Materials”), the ALUP sets forth policies to promote compatibility between the Paso Robles Municipal Airport and future land uses in the surrounding area by establishing a set of compatibility criteria that is applicable to new development. As shown in Figure 4.11-3, portions of the proposed 70 kV power line alignment, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and the Alternative PLR-1A and PLR-1C alignments would pass through the ALUP area. Figure 4.11-3 also shows County of San Luis Obispo planning areas in relation to the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives. As noted above, the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives are located in the El Pomar-Estrella and Salinas River sub-areas of the North County planning area.

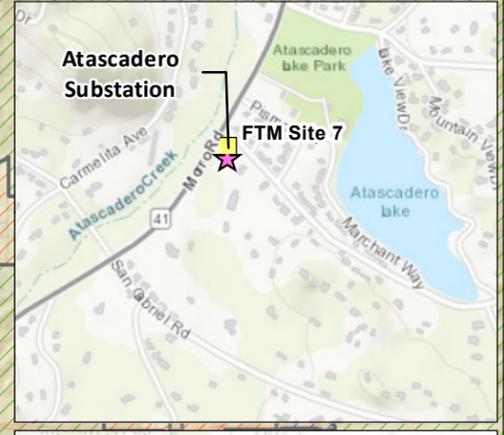
Finally, Figure 4.11-4 shows City of Paso Robles zoning districts in the vicinity of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives sites. Zoning districts generally serve to implement the land use designations identified in the general plan; thus, the zoning districts are generally consistent with the land use designations shown on Figure 4.11-4. As shown on Figure 4.11-4, zoning districts along or adjacent to the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives include Commercial/Light Industry (C3), Residential Agriculture (RA), Planned Industrial (PM), Agriculture (AG), Parks and Open Space (POS), Residential Single Family (R1), Residential Duplex/Triplex (R2), Regional Commercial (RC), Commercial-General Retail (C1), and Airport (AP).

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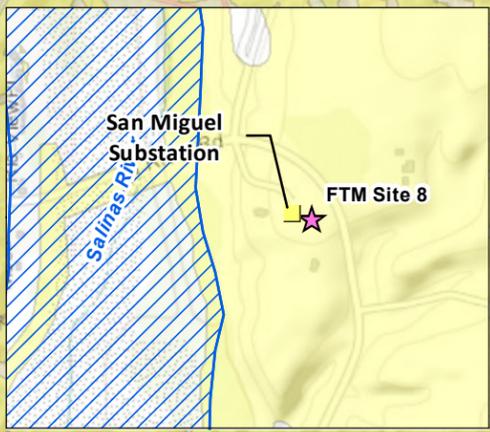
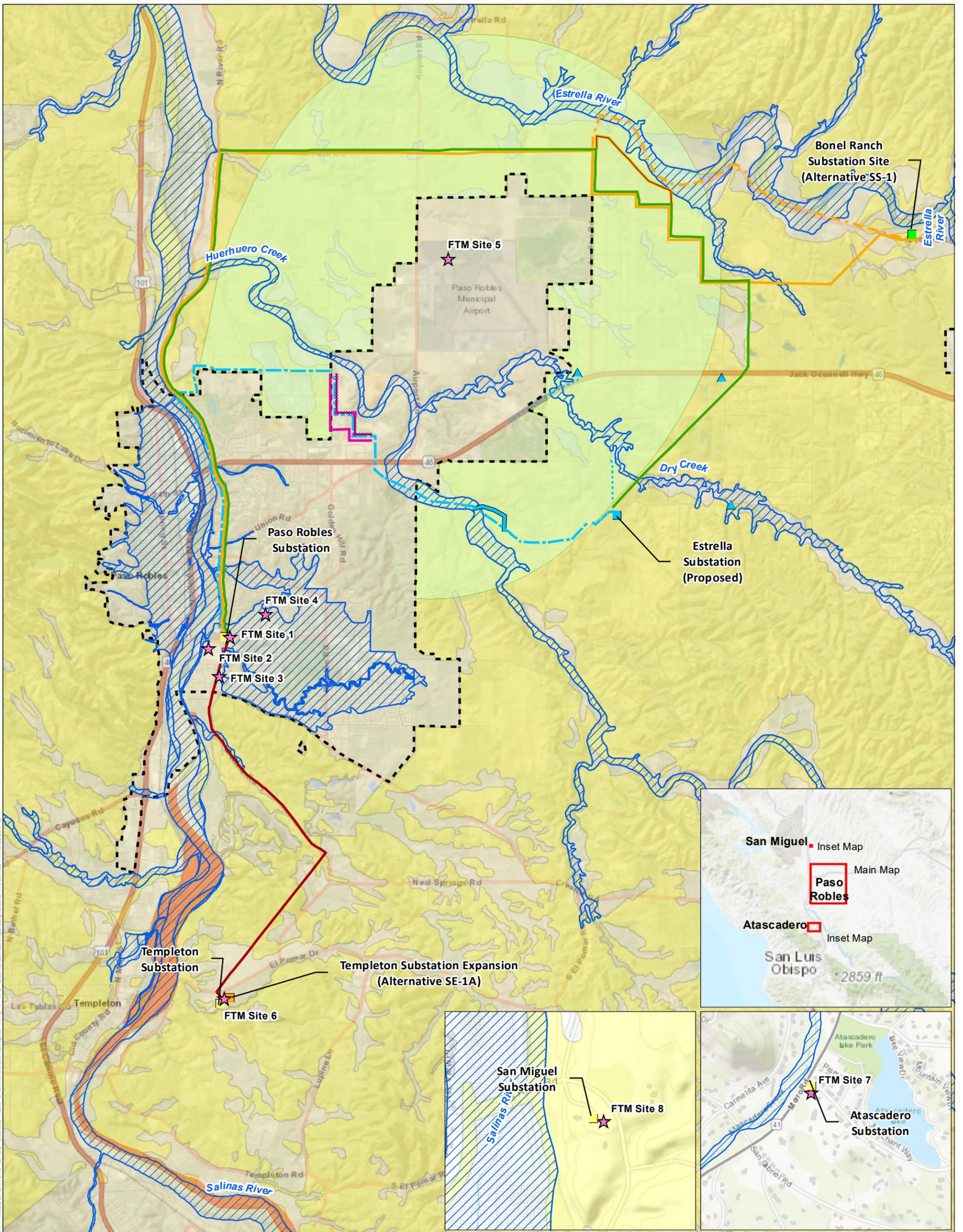
**County General Plan Land Use Designations**

	Agriculture		Public Facilities
	Commercial Retail		Recreation
	Commercial Service		Residential Multi-Family
	Industrial		Residential Rural
	Lake		Residential Single-Family
	Multiple Use Code		Residential Suburban
	Office and Professional		Rural Lands
	Open Space		



<p><b>Proposed Project</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Estrella Substation</li> </ul> <p><b>Existing Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Existing Substations</li> </ul> <p><b>Reasonably Forseeable Distribution Components</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> 70kV Route</li> <li> New Distribution Line Segments</li> <li> 70 kV Minor Route Variation 1</li> <li> Additional 21/12 kV Pad-Mounted Transformer</li> </ul>	<p><b>Project Alternatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Front-of-the-Meter (FTM) Battery Storage Sites (Alternative BS-2)</li> <li> Alternative SS-1: Bonel Ranch Substation Site</li> <li> Alternative SE-1A: Templeton Substation Expansion - 230/70 kV Substation</li> <li> Alternative PLR-1A: Estrella Route to Estrella Substation</li> <li> Alternative PLR-1C: Estrella Route to Bonel Ranch, Option 1</li> <li> Alternative PLR-1C: Minor Route Variation 1</li> <li> Alternative PLR-1C: Minor Route Variation 2</li> <li> Alternative PLR-3A: Strategic Undergrounding, Option 1</li> <li> Alternative PLR-3B: Strategic Undergrounding, Option 2</li> <li> Alternative SE-PLR-2: Templeton-Paso South River Road Route</li> </ul>	<p><b>Paso Robles General Plan Land Use Designations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> City Limits</li> <li> Agriculture; AG</li> <li> Business Park; BP</li> <li> Commercial Service; CS</li> <li> Community Commercial; CC</li> <li> Downtown Commercial; DC</li> <li> Industrial; IND</li> <li> Mixed Use; MU</li> <li> Mobile Home Park; MHP</li> <li> Neighborhood Commercial; NC</li> <li> Office Professional; OP</li> <li> Parks and Open Space; POS</li> <li> Public Facilities; PF</li> <li> Regional Commercial; RC</li> <li> Residential Multiple Family; RMF</li> <li> Residential Single Family; RSF</li> <li> Residential Suburban; RS</li> <li> Unspecified; UNK</li> </ul>	<p><b>Figure 4.11-1</b> General Land Use Designations</p> <p>Source: ESRI 2018, Paso Robles General Plan 2018; PG&amp;E 2019; SLO County 2019</p> <p>Note: The route variations shown are offset and simplified in order to display the alignments of the alternative routes that may overlap in places</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Estrella Substation and Paso Robles Area Reinforcement Project</p>
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- Proposed Project**
- Estrella Substation
- Existing Infrastructure**
- Existing Substations
  - 70kV Route
- Reasonably Foreseeable Distribution Components**
- New Distribution Line Segments
  - 70 kV Minor Route Variation 1
  - Additional 21/12 kV Pad-Mounted Transformer

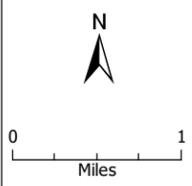
- Project Alternatives**
- Front-of-the-Meter (FTM) Battery Storage Sites (Alternative BS-2)
  - Alternative SS-1: Bonel Ranch Substation Site
  - Alternative SE-1A: Templeton Substation Expansion - 230/70 kV Substation
  - Alternative PLR-1A: Estrella Route to Estrella Substation
  - Alternative PLR-1C: Estrella Route to Bonel Ranch, Option 1
  - Alternative PLR-1C: Minor Route Variation 1
  - Alternative PLR-1C: Minor Route Variation 2
  - Alternative PLR-3A: Strategic Undergrounding, Option 1
  - Alternative PLR-3B: Strategic Undergrounding, Option 2
  - Alternative SE-PLR-2: Templeton-Paso South River Road Route

- County Features**
- Flood Hazard
  - City Limits
  - EX1 Extractive Resources
  - Airport Review
  - Renewable Energy

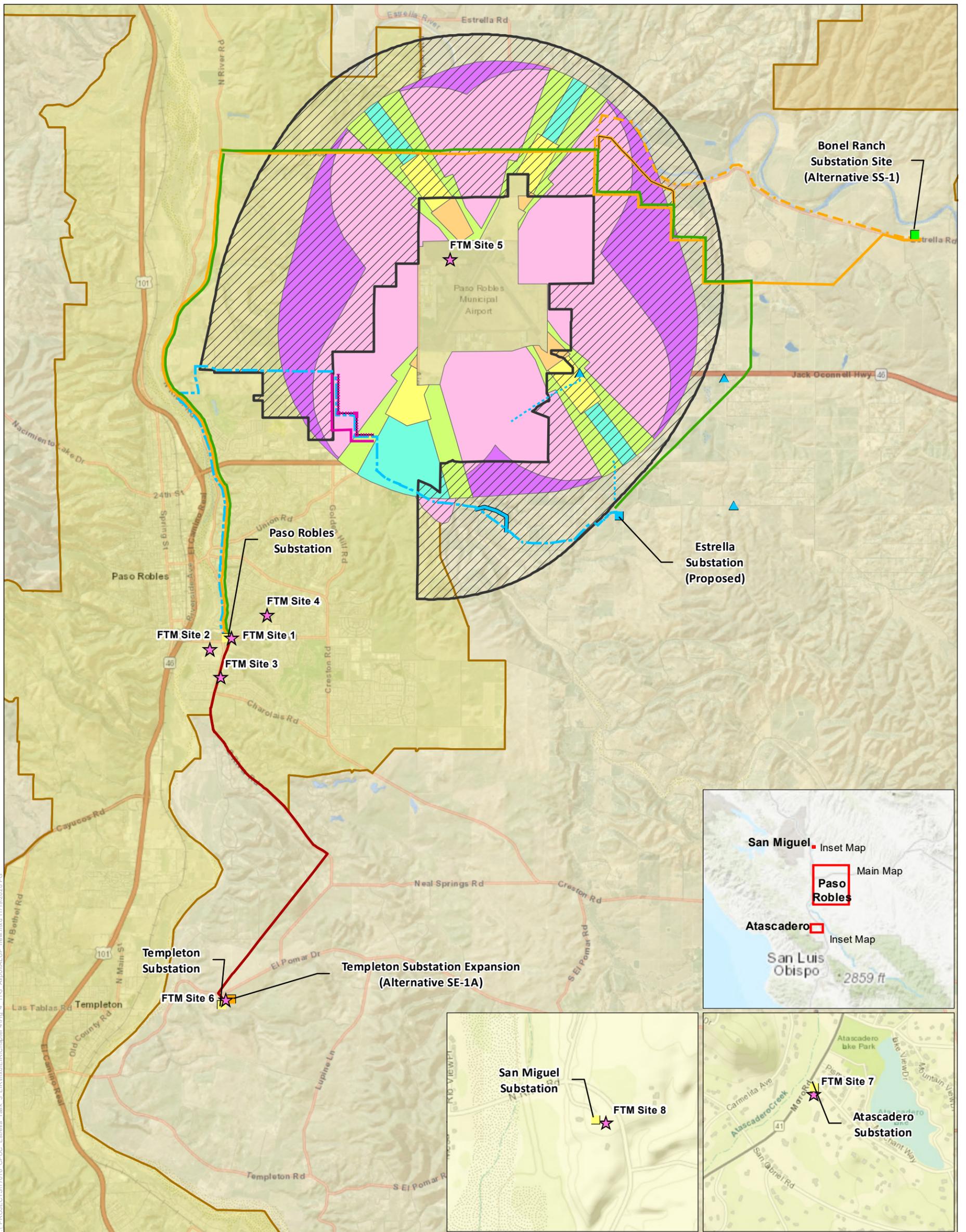
**Figure 4.11-2**  
County Combining Designations

Source: ESRI 2018, Paso Robles General Plan 2018; PG&E 2019; SCWA 2017; SLO County 2019

Note: The route variations shown are offset and simplified in order to display the alignments of the alternative routes that may overlap in places



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**Proposed Project**

- Estrella Substation
- 70kV Route
- 70 kV Minor Route Variation 1
- Reasonably Foreseeable Distribution Components**
- New Distribution Line Segments
- ▲ Additional 21/12 kV Pad-Mounted Transformer
- Existing Infrastructure**
- Existing Substations

**Project Alternatives**

- ★ Front-of-the-Meter (FTM) Battery Storage Sites (Alternative BS-2)
- Alternative SS-1: Bonel Ranch Substation Site
- Alternative SE-1A: Templeton Substation Expansion - 230/70 kV Substation
- Alternative PLR-1A: Estrella Route to Estrella Substation
- Alternative PLR-1C: Estrella Route to Bonel Ranch, Option 1
- Alternative PLR-1C: Minor Route Variation 1
- Alternative PLR-1C: Minor Route Variation 2
- Alternative PLR-3A: Strategic Undergrounding, Option 1
- Alternative PLR-3B: Strategic Undergrounding, Option 2
- Alternative SE-PLR-2: Templeton-Paso South River Road Route

**Airport Safety Zones**

- Airport Review Area
- Zone 1
- Zone 2
- Zone 3
- Zone 4
- Zone 5
- Zone 6

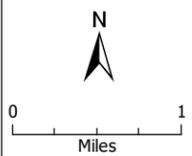
**Planning Areas**

- Planning Sub-area
- Shandon-Carrizo Sub-area
- Salinas River Sub-area

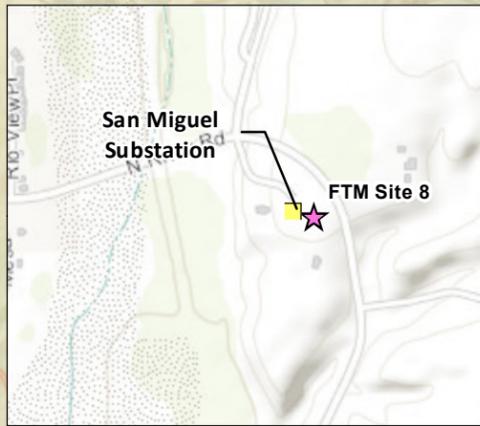
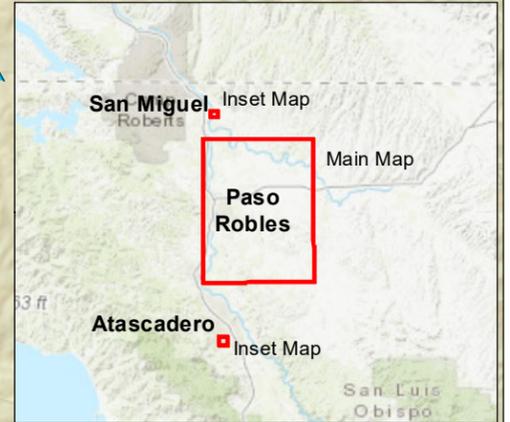
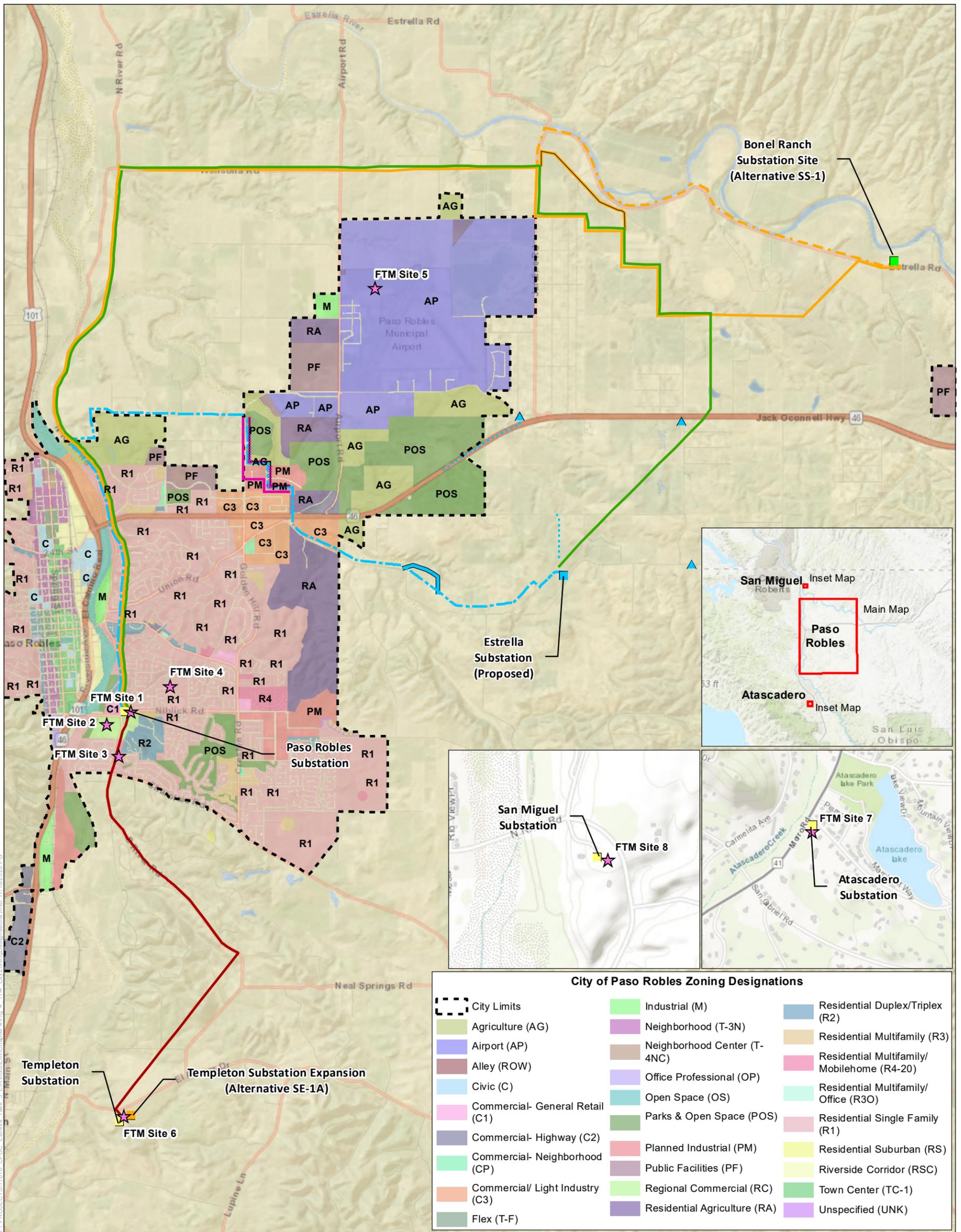
**Figure 4.11-3**  
Planning and ALUP Areas

Source: ESRI 2018, Paso Robles General Plan 2018, PG&E 2019, SCWA 2017

Note: The route variations shown are offset and simplified in order to display the alignments of the alternative routes that may overlap in places



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**Figure 4.11-3**  
City Zoning Designations

Source: ESRI 2018, Paso Robles General Plan 2018, PG&E 2019, SCWA 2017

Note: The route variations shown are offset and simplified in order to display the alignments of the alternative routes that may overlap in places

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#### 4.11.4 Impact Analysis

##### Methodology

The analysis of land use and planning impacts was qualitative in nature and involved comparing aspects of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives to the significance criteria described below.

##### Criteria for Determining Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would result in a significant impact related to land use and planning if they would:

- A. Physically divide an established community; or
- B. Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

##### Environmental Impacts

###### *Proposed Project*

###### **Impact LU-1: Physically divide an established community – *Less than Significant***

As discussed in Section 4.11.3, the proposed substation would be located in a rural, agricultural area of San Luis Obispo County. The proposed substation site is currently being used as a vineyard, and surrounding land uses include agricultural lands and vineyards. While development of the proposed Estrella Substation would convert roughly 15 acres of the existing vineyard to utility/industrial use, it would not physically divide an established community. There are existing 500/230 kV transmission lines immediately to the north of the proposed substation site (which the substation would connect to via the 230 kV interconnection), so the new substation would not be entirely out of character for the area, and access to the surrounding agricultural areas would not be disrupted. Once the substation is constructed, operation and maintenance activities would be infrequent and would not substantially interfere with farming operations or residential land uses in the surrounding area.

By contrast, the proposed new 70 kV power line segment would extend through agricultural lands as well as the Golden Hill Industrial Park and residential and recreation/open space areas. During construction, the communities and land uses along the 70 kV power line alignment could be disturbed due to the noise and construction activity and could be subject to road congestion and/or temporary access restrictions (see Section 4.17, "Transportation," for detailed discussion). These effects would be most acute for the commercial and industrial uses near Golden Hill Road, staff and patrons at Cava Robles RV Resort, and residents of Circle B HOA. Nevertheless, these construction-related impacts would not be considered a physical division of an established community because the activities would be temporary and construction would be completed in a linear and segmented fashion (e.g., installation of a single transmission structure would occur over a few weeks and then construction crews would move to the next

location along the alignment), and would not result in a significant impact. Additionally, implementation of Mitigation Measure TR-1 (see Section 4.17, “Transportation”), which requires the implementation of a site-specific construction traffic control plan including measures designed to minimize vehicle travel delays and potential roadway hazards and congestion on public roadways during construction, would minimize the impacts (though this mitigation measure is not considered necessary to reduce land use impacts to a less than significant level).

Once constructed, the new 70 kV power line would not constitute a physical barrier separating any existing communities. The individual power line poles would be spaced hundreds of feet apart and the line would not prevent movement by members of the community. The 70 kV power line reconductoring segment exists currently and the replacement of poles/reconductoring activities would not substantially change the nature of the existing power line segment and would not physically divide an existing community. The power line would operate unattended, and inspections and maintenance activities would be infrequent and would have no potential to divide the community. Therefore, this impact would be **less than significant**.

**Impact LU-2: Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect – *Less than Significant***

As described in Section 4.11.2, the CPUC has exclusive jurisdiction over the siting and design of power line projects and substations; therefore, the Proposed Project is exempt from local land use and zoning regulations. Nevertheless, potential conflicts with land use plans, policies, or regulations are discussed here for informational purposes and in accordance with CPUC G.O. 131-D, which states that in locating a project, the public utilities shall consult with the local agencies regarding land use matters.

The proposed Estrella Substation and 70 kV power line would be located on lands with various land use designations and zoning districts identified by the County of San Luis Obispo and the City of Paso Robles. While many of these land use designations/zoning districts do not explicitly call for public utility uses, the substation and power line would be allowable uses and would not substantially conflict with the county or city land use plans. Specifically, while the proposed Estrella Substation would not further the County of San Luis Obispo Agriculture designation, which, among other things, is intended to recognize and retain commercial agriculture as a desirable land use and as a major segment of the county’s economic base, public utility facilities are allowed in the Agriculture designation with a Conditional Use Permit (see Appendix A, County of San Luis Obispo Land Use Ordinance Table 2-2). Similarly, transmission lines are allowable uses in the Agriculture designation subject to a land use permit. As shown in Appendix A, transmission lines and substations are permitted or conditionally permitted uses in all zoning districts in the City of Paso Robles within which the Proposed Project components would occur.

The potential for Proposed Project facilities to expose people or structures to hazards from being located within a flood hazard zone (e.g., FH combining designation) is discussed in Section 4.10, “Hydrology and Water Quality.” While the proposed 70 kV power line would cross Huer Huero Creek and several poles would be located within the flood hazard zone, the pole structures would not reasonably obstruct flood flows and would not subject persons to hazards from being located in the flood zone. Therefore, the intent of the FH combining designation “to

reduce risks to life and property through proper location and design of structures within areas subject to man-made or natural hazards, such as: airports; flooding; or geologic hazards, including active faulting, landsliding, or liquefaction” would be satisfied.

Additionally, the potential for the Proposed Project to convert agricultural land to non-agricultural uses is described in Section 4.2, “Agriculture and Forestry Resources.” This impact is considered significant and unavoidable from the perspective of agriculture and forestry resources (as the Proposed Project would permanently convert roughly 15 acres of Important Farmland to non-agricultural uses), but it is not considered a significant land use impact. This is the case because public utility facilities are conditionally permitted uses in the Agriculture designation and because the CPUC is not subject to local land use regulations in siting transmission facilities.

As shown in Figure 4.11-3, much of the proposed new 70 kV power line segment would be within the airport review area and within the safety zones identified in the ALUP for the Paso Robles Municipal Airport. As described in Appendix A, the ALUP Land Use Compatibility Matrix lists overhead transmission lines as incompatible uses in all of the safety zones. In this regard, the Proposed Project would conflict with the ALUP. However, the San Luis Obispo County Airport Land Use Commission has adopted FAA Regulations Part 77, “Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace,” which allows for utility line facilities within prescribed height limits. As discussed in Section 4.9, “Hazards and Hazardous Materials,” the proposed 70 kV power line would be within the height limits under FAA regulations. The Applicants filed a Notice of Proposed Construction and Alteration Application for the project and the FAA determined that the new power line segment does not exceed FAA obstruction standards and no marking and/or lighting is required (NEET West and PG&E 2017). In light of this determination, the conflict with the ALUP related to the blanket prohibition on overhead transmission lines in all safety zones is considered less than significant because safety hazard impacts would not be significant.

With respect to the County’s RE combining designation, the Proposed Project would not substantially constrain the availability of renewable energy resources in the Proposed Project area. While solar panels or other renewable energy generation systems could not be developed immediately on the Estrella Substation site in the future, such facilities could be built adjacent to the substation or power line alignment and could be easily interconnected to the transmission system. Overall, the Proposed Project would not cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Therefore, this impact would be **less than significant**.

### ***Reasonably Foreseeable Distribution Components and Ultimate Substation Buildout***

Similar to the Proposed Project components, the reasonably foreseeable distribution components (i.e., new distribution line segments and additional 21/12 kV pad-mounted transformers) would not physically divide an existing community or cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with a land use plan, policy, or regulation. The new distribution line segments would complete gaps in the existing distribution line network and would be installed largely within existing road rights-of-way. Construction of the distribution components would involve relatively minor disruptions to the immediate areas and, once constructed, the distribution components would not physically separate any communities or

prevent movement of persons within the community. Similarly, the equipment and facilities associated with ultimate substation buildout would primarily be placed within the fence line of the already-constructed Estrella Substation and thus would not physically divide an existing community. Although the routes of additional distribution feeders and/or 70 kV lines potentially established through ultimate substation buildout are unknown and impacts are thus speculative, these lines would not physically divide an established community for the reasons described in Impact LU-1 (e.g., poles would be spaced hundreds of feet apart and would not substantially limit movement by members of the community). Therefore, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant**.

As shown in Figure 4.11-1, the new distribution line segments (both northern and southern) would be primarily located on county land designated for agricultural use, although a portion of northern distribution line segment would be installed within the City of Paso Robles along SR 46 with Parks and Open Space (POS) land on either side of the highway. Like the proposed 70 kV power line, the new distribution line segments (and pad-mounted transformers) would not substantially conflict with agricultural use in these locations, particularly since they would be installed along existing roads.

As shown in Figure 4.11-2, the new distribution line segments fall within the Paso Robles Municipal Airport Review Area. As shown in Figure 4.11-3, the northern new distribution line segment would be located entirely within the Paso Robles Municipal Airport ALUP safety zones, while a portion of the southern distribution line would also be located within the ALUP area. At a maximum of 50 feet tall and approximately 0.75-mile from the terminus of the nearest runway of the Paso Robles Municipal Airport, the new distribution line poles would not appear to exceed FAA's obstruction standards (as defined in 14 CFR Part 77) such as to pose a substantial hazard to aircraft. The new distribution lines would complete gaps in the existing distribution network and thus would not introduce new structures to the area that are any taller than the existing distribution line poles. With respect to ultimate substation buildout, equipment and facilities would primarily be placed within the fence line of the already-constructed Estrella Substation. Installation of additional transmission and distribution transformers and associated equipment within the 70 kV and 230 kV substations is assumed to not result in any substantial increase in height of the substation. Potential conflicts with land use plans, policies, or regulations from future additional distribution feeders and/or 70 kV power lines that could be established through ultimate substation buildout are speculative as the routes of these facilities are not yet known. As a result, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

## ***Alternatives***

### **No Project Alternative**

Under the No Project Alternative, no new substation or new/reconducted power line would be constructed; therefore, there would be no potential for these features to divide an established community or conflict with any existing land use plans, regulations, or policies such as to result in a significant environmental impact. Therefore, **no impact** would occur under either significance criteria A or B.

### **Alternative SS-1: Bonel Ranch Substation Site**

The Bonel Ranch Substation Site is located in a rural area of San Luis Obispo County along the Estrella River. The site is on land currently used for agriculture and designated for agricultural use by the county, as shown in Figure 4.11-1. There is no residential or urban community development in the immediate area; as such, there would be no potential for construction and operation of the substation at this site to physically divide an established community. Once constructed, the substation would not preclude any existing access to homes or areas and would operate remotely with no staff on site. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant**.

As described under Impact LU-2, public utility facilities are a conditionally permitted use within the Agriculture designation. Therefore, Alternative SS-1 would not conflict with the local land use designation or zoning. Refer to Section 4.2, "Agriculture and Forestry Resources," for discussion of the potential for Alternative SS-1 to convert Important Farmland to non-agricultural use, which is not considered a significant land use impact. As shown in Figure 4.11-3, the Bonel Ranch Substation Site is located outside of the Paso Robles Municipal Airport ALUP area. With respect to the RE combining designation, Alternative SS-1 would not substantially affect the availability of renewable energy resources in this area, as described in Impact LU-2 above for the Proposed Project. As a result, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

### **Alternative PLR-1A: Estrella Route to Estrella Substation**

As described above, Alternative PLR-1A would pass through primarily rural and agricultural lands to the north of the City of Paso Robles. The Alternative PLR-1A route would not pass through any densely developed residential or urban communities (apart from the southern portion of the reconductoring segment, which would be the same as the Proposed Project). As such, construction and operation of the 70 kV power line under Alternative PLR-1A would have no potential to physically divide an established community. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant**.

As shown on Figure 4.11-1, the new power line segment under Alternative PLR-1A would pass almost entirely through lands designated for Agriculture (small portions of the alignment would pass through areas designated Residential Suburban). A power line is considered an allowable use in the Agriculture and Residential Suburban designations, per County of San Luis Obispo Land Use Ordinance Table 2-2. Therefore, Alternative PLR-1A would not conflict with local land use regulations. The portion of the Alternative PLR-1A reconductoring segment that occurs within the City of Paso Robles, including lands zoned for Agriculture (AG), Residential Single Family (R1), and Residential Duplex/Triplex (R2), would be the same as the Proposed Project and the reconductoring activities would not change the existing land use or conflict with the zoning. Refer to Section 4.2, "Agriculture and Forestry Resources," for discussion of the potential for Alternative PLR-1A to convert Important Farmland to non-agricultural use, which is not considered a significant land use impact.

As shown in Figure 4.11-3, much of the length of the Alternative PLR-1A new 70 kV power line segment would extend through ALUP safety zones. As described in Impact LU-2 and Appendix A, the ALUP Land Use Compatibility Matrix lists overhead transmission lines as incompatible uses in all of the safety zones. However, like the Proposed Project, the Alternative PLR-1A power line

would be composed of a combination of LDSPs and TSPs with a maximum height of 133 feet, which would be lower than the 200 feet aboveground limit under FAA Regulations Part 77. FAA has not been notified of, or made a determination, regarding Alternative PLR-1A, but given that the alternative would be similar in nature to the Proposed Project 70 kV power line and would be installed at a similar distance from the Paso Robles Municipal Airport, it is anticipated that FAA would find that the alternative does not exceed obstruction standards, resulting in a less than significant impact with respect to ALUP conflicts. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

### **Alternative PLR-1C: Estrella Route to Bonel Ranch, Option 1**

Like Alternative PLR-1A, Alternative PLR-1C would pass through primarily rural and agricultural lands to the north of the City of Paso Robles. The Alternative PLR-1C route would not pass through any densely developed residential or urban communities (apart from the southern portion of the reconductoring segment, which would be the same as the Proposed Project). As such, construction and operation of the 70 kV power line under Alternative PLR-1C would have no potential to physically divide an established community. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant**.

As shown on Figure 4.11-1, the new power line segment under Alternative PLR-1C would pass almost entirely through lands designated for Agriculture (one small portion of the alignment would border lands designated Residential Suburban). A power line is considered an allowable use in the Agriculture and Residential Suburban designations, per County of San Luis Obispo Land Use Ordinance Table 2-2. Therefore, Alternative PLR-1C would not conflict with local land use regulations. The portion of the Alternative PLR-1C reconductoring segment that occurs within the City of Paso Robles, including lands zoned for Agriculture (AG), Residential Single Family (R1), and Residential Duplex/Triplex (R2), would be the same as the Proposed Project and the reconductoring activities would not change the existing land use or conflict with the zoning. Refer to Section 4.2, "Agriculture and Forestry Resources," for discussion of the potential for Alternative PLR-1C to convert Important Farmland to non-agricultural use, which is not considered a significant land use impact.

As shown in Figure 4.11-3, much of the length of the Alternative PLR-1C new 70 kV power line segment would extend through ALUP safety zones. As described in Impact LU-2 and Appendix A, the ALUP Land Use Compatibility Matrix lists overhead transmission lines as incompatible uses in all of the safety zones. However, like the Proposed Project, Alternative PLR-1C power line would be composed of a combination of LDSPs and TSPs with a maximum height of 133 feet, which would be lower than the 200 feet aboveground limit under FAA Regulations Part 77. FAA has not been notified of, or made a determination, regarding Alternative PLR-1C, but given that the alternative would be similar in nature to the Proposed Project 70 kV power line and would be installed at a similar distance from the Paso Robles Municipal Airport, it is anticipated that FAA would find that the alternative does not exceed obstruction standards, resulting in a less than significant impact with respect to ALUP conflicts. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

### **Alternatives PLR-3: Strategic Undergrounding (Both Options)**

Alternative PLR-3 would underground the portion of the Proposed Project 70 kV power line in the area of Golden Hill Road, as described in Chapter 3, *Alternatives Description*. Option 1 would

follow Wisteria Lane, while Option 2 would follow the Proposed Project 70 kV alignment. During construction, Alternative PLR-3 would involve substantial trenching within the roadways along the Alternative PLR-3 alignments, requiring lane closures for numerous weeks during the construction period. As a result, compared to the Proposed Project overhead 70 kV power line, construction of Alternative PLR-3 would have increased potential to disrupt the community and adversely affect access for local residents and business owners. Nevertheless, this impact would be temporary, constructed over a duration of approximately 12 months. Construction would not be considered a physical division of the existing community because once installed, the Alternative PLR-3 components (with the exception of the transition stations) would be located entirely underground and would not affect the existing community. Implementation of Mitigation Measure TR-1, described above, would also minimize construction impacts (though this mitigation measure is not considered necessary to reduce land use impacts to a less than significant level). Therefore, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant**.

As shown in Figure 4.11-1 and Figure 4.11-4, Alternative PLR-3 (both options) passes through areas zoned Planned Industrial (PM), Parks and Open Space (POS), and Agriculture (AG) by the City of Paso Robles, and is adjacent to areas designated Residential Rural by San Luis Obispo County. However, given that the Alternative PLR-3 components would be almost entirely underground, they would not conflict with the existing land use designations or zoning. The transition stations would be conditionally permitted uses within the applicable zoning districts. Alternative PLR-3 would be entirely within the AR combining designation and ALUP safety zones; however, given that the power line would be installed underground, it would not pose a hazard to aircraft and would have no potential to exceed FAA obstruction standards. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

#### **Alternative SE-1A: Templeton Substation Expansion – 230/70 kV Substation**

The Templeton Substation Expansion Site is located in a rural area of San Luis Obispo County adjacent to the existing Templeton Substation off of El-Pomar Road. The site is on land currently used for agriculture and designated for agricultural use by the County, as shown in Figure 4.11-1. There is no residential or urban community development in the immediate area; as such, there would be no potential for construction and operation of the substation at this site to physically divide an established community. Once constructed, the substation would not preclude any existing access to homes or areas and would operate remotely with no staff on site. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant**.

As described under Impact LU-2, public utility facilities are a conditionally permitted use within the Agriculture designation. Therefore, Alternative SE-1A would not conflict with the local land use designation. Refer to Section 4.2, "Agriculture and Forestry Resources," for discussion of the potential for Alternative SE-1A to convert Important Farmland to non-agricultural use, which is not considered a significant land use impact. As shown in Figure 4.11-3, the Templeton Substation Expansion Site is located well outside of the Paso Robles Municipal Airport ALUP area. With respect to the RE combining designation, Alternative SE-1A would not substantially affect the availability of renewable energy resources in this area. As a result, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

### **Alternative SE-PLR-2: Templeton-Paso South River Road Route**

Alternative SE-PLR-2 would pass through agricultural, rural residential, and densely developed residential and commercial areas near the Paso Robles Substation. In particular, the Alternative SE-PLR-2 route would pass through the Santa Ysabel Ranch HOA along South River Road and the neighborhood of Paso Robles along South River Road north of Charolais Road and south of Niblick Road. As described for the Proposed Project 70 kV power line, construction of Alternative SE-PLR-2 could disturb the community and potentially limit access during the construction period due to operation of construction equipment on public roadways and possible lane closures. These effects, however, would be temporary and would not be considered a physical division of the community because construction activities would be implemented in segments, whereby construction at any one structure location would be for a relatively short duration and a substantive physical division would not be established. Once constructed, the new power line segment under Alternative SE-PLR-2 would not hinder access, movement of people or vehicles, or otherwise physically divide the established communities. Implementation of Mitigation Measure TR-1, described above, would also minimize construction impacts (though this mitigation measure is not considered necessary to reduce land use impacts to a less than significant level). Therefore, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant**.

As shown on Figure 4.11-1 and Figure 4.11-4, the new power line segment under Alternative SE-PLR-2 would pass through lands designated Agriculture and Residential Rural by the County, and lands zoned Residential Single Family (R1) and Regional Commercial (RC) by the City of Paso Robles. A power line is considered an allowable use in the Agriculture and Residential Rural designations, per County of San Luis Obispo Land Use Ordinance Table 2-2, and is a permitted or conditionally permitted use in the RC and R1 zoning districts (see Appendix A). Therefore, Alternative SE-PLR-2 would not conflict with local land use regulations. Refer to Section 4.2, "Agriculture and Forestry Resources," for discussion of the potential for Alternative SE-PLR-2 to convert Important Farmland to non-agricultural use, which is not considered a significant land use impact.

During scoping for the Proposed Project, residents from the Santa Ysabel Ranch HOA submitted comments noting that Alternative SE-PLR-2 would traverse through an area governed by a 2002 agreement between the County and the Santa Ysabel Ranch HOA establishing an open space easement for the land generally comprising the Santa Ysabel Ranch HOA (Tashjian 2019). A primary purpose of the agreement was to retain an existing wildlife movement corridor located within the Santa Ysabel Ranch HOA area and to set aside an unfragmented section of land that would benefit the San Joaquin kit fox along with other associated plant and animal species (Tashjian 2019). The agreement also stated that the Santa Ysabel Ranch HOA area has certain natural beauty and existing openness, and that both the Santa Ysabel Ranch HOA and the County desired to preserve and conserve for the public benefit the great natural scenic beauty and existing openness, natural condition and present state of use of the subject property (Tashjian 2019). Importantly, however, the agreement states (section 5):

*"...nothing contained in this agreement shall prohibit the construction of either public services facilities installed for the benefit of the Subject Property or public service facilities installed pursuant to an authorization of the Board of Supervisors of the County or the Public Utilities Commission."*

Given this statement alone, Alternative SE-PLR-2 would not conflict with the agreement provided by the scoping commenters. Additionally, as described in Section 4.11.2 above, the CPUC has exclusive jurisdiction over the siting and design of power line projects and substations; therefore, it would not be subject to any local land use agreements, such as the one between the Santa Ysabel Ranch HOA and County of San Luis Obispo. Further, as described in detail in Section 4.4, "Biological Resources," the power line under Alternative SE-PLR-2, with individual poles spaced hundreds of feet apart, would not substantially affect movement of kit fox in this area. While the new power line poles would adversely affect the existing scenic quality and visual character in the area, this would not be a land use impact under significance criterion B (rather, it would be an aesthetics impact; see Section 4.1, "Aesthetics," for discussion).

As shown in Figure 4.11-3, Alternative SE-PLR-2 is located entirely outside of the ALUP area for the Paso Robles Municipal Airport. The Alternative SE-PLR-2 route would cross over the County FH combining designation in several places; but, as discussed in Impact LU-2, the pole structures would not reasonably obstruct flood flows and would not subject persons to hazards from being located in the flood zone. Regarding the RE designated areas, the Alternative SE-PLR-2 power line would not preclude future development of renewable energy resources in this area. As such, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

#### **Alternative BS-2: Battery Storage to Address the Distribution Objective**

As described in Chapter 3, *Alternatives Description*, potential FTM battery storage sites are identified under Alternative BS-2 for illustrative purposes for this DEIR. FTM battery storage facilities could be constructed at the example FTM sites (1 through 8) or at other sites identified in the future. For the sake of this evaluation, development of FTM BESSs at the example FTM sites would have no potential to physically divide an established community as the FTM BESSs would be installed on individual vacant parcels/sites interspersed within the existing developed area or at area substations. Generally, BESSs would be either contained within buildings or potentially exposed as stacked containers and other associated infrastructure. As such, the FTM BESSs would not limit access or movement of people or vehicles in the surrounding area, although some disturbance to the community during construction is possible.

As shown on Figure 4.11-1 and Figure 4.11-4, FTM sites are located on lands designated Agriculture and Residential Suburban, or zoned Residential Single Family (R1), Regional Commercial (RC), or Airport (AP). As public utility facilities (similar in nature to small substations), the BESSs would be allowable or permitted uses on these land use designations and zoning districts. For these example locations, Alternative BS-2 would not conflict with the local land use designations or zoning. As shown in Figure 4.11-3, FTM Site 5 is located within the ALUP area and is in fact located directly adjacent to the CAL FIRE Air Attack Base and Paso Robles Municipal Airport. However, the BESS facility would be no taller than the surrounding buildings and would not pose a hazard to aircraft or substantially conflict with the ALUP.

Overall, FTM BESS sites were selected for illustrative purposes only, BESS installations have not been designed and technologies have not been selected, and the specifics of Alternative BS-2 are unknown. Thus, project-level determinations cannot be made as impacts are speculative. Therefore, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15145, no significance conclusion is provided for any of the significance criteria.

**Alternative BS-3: Third Party, Behind-the-Meter Solar and Battery Storage**

Specific locations of individual BTM facilities under Alternative BS-3 are unknown; however, as described in Chapter 3, *Alternatives Description*, BTM solar and battery storage facilities would most likely be placed on or within existing buildings. Should a BTM solar or battery storage facility be placed on an existing commercial, industrial, or residential property, it would not physically divide an existing community.

Because specific locations for individual BTM facilities are unknown, whether or not construction of facilities would conflict with any local land use policies, plans or regulations requiring discretionary approval would also be unknown. A determination as to whether or not such potential conflict(s) would constitute a substantive adverse impact to land use would be considered speculative. Generally, BTM solar and battery storage facilities would be placed on or within existing buildings and are not expected to substantially change the existing land use of the property on which they are installed.

Overall, due to the fact that specific locations and characteristics of BTM resources procured under Alternative BS-3 are unknown at this time, project-level impact determinations are not possible as the impacts are speculative. Therefore, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15145, no significance conclusion is reached under any of the significance criteria.