

4.14 Population and Housing

4.14.1 Introduction

This section presents an overview of population and housing within the vicinity of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives. For detailed discussion of local laws, regulations, and policies related to population and housing, refer to Appendix A of this FEIR. This section includes an analysis of the potential impacts of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives on population and housing.

4.14.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal Laws, Regulations, and Policies

No federal laws, regulations, or policies are applicable to population and housing in relation to the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, or alternatives.

State Laws, Regulations, and Policies

No state laws, regulations, or policies are applicable to population and housing in relation to the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, or alternatives.

4.14.3 Environmental Setting

The Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would be located in the northern portion of San Luis Obispo County. The majority of the Proposed Project, including the Estrella Substation, would be located in the unincorporated county, but portions of the Proposed Project's new and reconducted 70 kV power line segments would be located within the city of Paso Robles. The reasonably foreseeable distribution components would be located primarily within the county, except for a portion of the northern new distribution line segment.

Many of the alternatives under consideration would be located entirely or mostly within unincorporated San Luis Obispo County. Alternatives SS-1 and SE-1A are both located entirely in the unincorporated county, while the majority of the lengths of Alternatives PLR-1A, PLR-1C, and SE-PLR-2 are located in the unincorporated county, with small portions located within the city of Paso Robles. Portions of Alternative PLR-3 are located within both unincorporated San Luis Obispo County and the city of Paso Robles. Of the example FTM battery storage sites considered in this EIR, FTM Sites 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are located within the city of Paso Robles, while FTM Sites 6, 7, and 8 are located in unincorporated areas.

In general, the unincorporated areas are less population-dense and developed than the areas within the city limits. The population and housing characteristics of San Luis Obispo County and the city of Paso Robles are discussed further below.

Population

San Luis Obispo County historically has had steady growth, although this growth has slowed in recent decades. In 2010, San Luis Obispo County had a population of 269,637, of which 121,330 (45 percent of the total) was located in unincorporated areas of San Luis Obispo County. The growth rate for the county from 2000 to 2010 was 10 percent, averaging 1 percent per year as a whole, with unincorporated areas averaging approximately 0.3 percent per year (NEET West and PG&E 2017). The population estimate for San Luis Obispo County for 2019 is 283,111, indicating that there has been a 5.0 percent increase in population from April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020). In 2010, there were 81.7 persons per square mile (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).

The city of Paso Robles's population was 29,793 in 2010. From 2000 to 2010, the city's population increased by 23 percent, with most of the growth occurring east of the Salinas River (NEET West and PG&E 2017). The single largest land use within Paso Robles is residential land, comprising approximately 4,352 acres, or 39 percent of the city's total acreage (NEET West and PG&E 2017).

Housing

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2018, San Luis Obispo County had 122,971 housing units (U.S. Census Bureau 2020), up from 117,315 housing units in 2010 (NEET West and PG&E 2017). San Luis Obispo County issued 1,094 housing building permits in 2019 (U.S., Census Bureau 2020).

In 2010, there were 11,426 housing units in the city of Paso Robles, with a vacancy rate of 5 percent (City of Paso Robles 2014a; NEET West and PG&E 2017). Between December 31, 2014, and August 31, 2015, a total of 31 new residential units were completed in the city. Permits for an additional 37 units were issued during that time period and there were also pending applications for an additional 48 units (NEET West and PG&E 2017).

There are more than 20 hotels/motels spread throughout the city, as well as more than 30 bed and breakfasts, three RV resorts, and dozens of other vacation rentals. Rental vacancy rates in the city in 2010 were 1.7 percent, while rental vacancy rates in 2013 were approximately 1.6 percent (City of Paso Robles 2014a). Seventeen hotels, motels, and boutique hotels were identified within 10 miles of downtown Paso Robles (TripAdvisor 2017).

Workforce

The Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives are located within the San Luis Obispo – Paso Robles – Arroyo Grande Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which is a geographic area defined by the California Employment Development Department (EDD). In March 2020, the San Luis Obispo – Paso Robles – Arroyo Grande MSA had a labor force of 121,700 individuals, including a workforce of 8,200 in the Natural Resources, Mining, and Construction and 20,600 in the Trade, Transportation, and Utilities industry sectors (EDD 2020).

4.14.4 Impact Analysis

Methodology

This impact analysis describes the impacts on population and housing that could result from implementation of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives. Impacts were evaluated qualitatively with respect to the significance criteria below.

Criteria for Determining Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, or alternatives would result in a significant impact on population and housing if they would:

- A. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposed new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure); or
- B. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

Environmental Impacts

Proposed Project

Impact POP-1: Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure). – Less than Significant

Construction

During construction, the Proposed Project could result in a small amount of temporary population growth from workers temporarily relocating to the area. As described in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, construction of the Estrella Substation would take approximately ~~7~~12 months, and completion of the 70 kV power line would take approximately 18 months. At the peak of construction of the respective components, it is estimated that construction of the Estrella Substation would require ~~12~~10 to 15 workers per day, while construction of the 70 kV power line would require 30 workers per day.

Depending on the type of labor and skills required, these workers would either come from local areas or further locations, requiring them to possibly temporarily relocate to the Paso Robles area for the duration of construction. Workers for the more common development tasks of grading and building foundations for the Estrella Substation and new power line routes are likely to be hired from within San Luis Obispo County. Workers installing the Estrella Substation equipment and the new and reconducted 70 kV power line segments would have specialized skills and may be drawn from either San Luis Obispo County or further away. If local, workers would likely commute from their residences. If living too great a distance to commute, workers would likely stay in temporary lodging (most likely hotels or motels in Paso Robles).

Due to the relatively short-term ~~18~~²¹-month construction duration, it is unlikely that non-local workers would take up permanent residence in the area. Given the small amount of construction workers needed for the job, the short-term lodging that may be required for the Proposed Project construction workers is expected to be accommodated by existing units. Therefore, any short-term growth inducement during Proposed Project construction would be **less than significant**.

Operation

Once constructed, the proposed Estrella Substation and 70 kV power line components would operate remotely and would not require any permanent staff on-site. The Proposed Project facilities would be inspected periodically (the substation would be inspected monthly, while the 70 kV power line would be inspected annually), with any necessary repairs or maintenance conducted on an as-needed basis. This work would most likely be performed by a small crew of one to two technicians and personnel provided by the equipment vendor.

The Proposed Project would not include any new homes or businesses; therefore, it would not directly induce any substantial population growth. The Proposed Project, on its own, would not extend electric distribution infrastructure to new areas, such as to potentially indirectly induce population growth. However, the Proposed Project with buildout of the reasonably foreseeable distribution components (see further discussion below) would expand electrical distribution service capacity to accommodate future anticipated growth in the Paso Robles Distribution Planning Area (DPA). The Proposed Project need and the Distribution Objective are discussed in detail in Chapter 2, *Project Description*. Following completion of the Proposed Project and buildout of the reasonably foreseeable distribution components, PG&E would be able to more effectively provide electricity to new applications (e.g., new homes and businesses). Without the Proposed Project, it is conceivable that PG&E may not be able to accommodate the level of growth that is anticipated in the DPA. As described in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, and in PEA Appendix G, City of Paso Robles planners expect strong industrial growth to occur north of SR 46 (in particular within the Golden Hill Industrial Park and directly south of Paso Robles Airport along Dry Creek Road) within the next 10 years, and a resurgence of residential growth south of SR 46 (NEET West and PG&E 2020). Overall, city planners estimate a nearly 50 percent increase in the population of Paso Robles by 2045 (NEET West and PG&E 2020; City of Paso Robles 2014b; U.S. Census Bureau 2014).

While the Proposed Project, with buildout of the reasonably foreseeable distribution components, would serve the new growth anticipated by the city, it would not cause or result in this growth. By accommodating anticipated growth, the Proposed Project and reasonably foreseeable distribution components would support achievement of the overall goal in the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan Housing Element to “achieve an adequate supply of safe and decent housing that is affordable to all residents of San Luis Obispo County,” as well as Policy HE 1.12, which seeks to “reduce infrastructure constraints for development of housing to the extent possible....” The Proposed Project and reasonably foreseeable distribution components also would be consistent with the City of Paso Robles General Plan Housing Element (see Appendix A) and Land Use Map, which identifies industrial land use areas north of SR 46 near the airport and residential use areas south of SR 46 (e.g., North Chandler Ranch Specific Plan to include 879 dwellings). Overall, the Proposed Project and reasonably foreseeable distribution components would not substantially change the rural, agricultural

atmosphere of the greater Paso Robles planning area, which is consistent with the intent of the Housing Element. Therefore, this impact would be **less than significant**.

Impact POP-2: Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. – *Less than Significant*

There are no houses or people currently residing on the proposed Estrella Substation site, and no houses would require demolition or removal for construction of the 70 kV power line. The Proposed Project would require acquisition of property and easements by the Applicants at the substation site and along the length of the new power line, but these easements would not require that any structures be removed or any people be relocated. Construction of the Proposed Project may require some individuals to temporarily leave their homes to ensure their safety during helicopter operations, but these individuals would not be permanently displaced and replacement housing would not be required to be constructed. As such, this impact would be **less than significant**.

Reasonably Foreseeable Distribution Components and Ultimate Substation Buildout

Construction of the reasonably foreseeable distribution components would take approximately 19 weeks and would require up to 12 workers per day (see Table 2-10 in Chapter 2, *Project Description*). For the reasons discussed above under Impact POP-1, this number of workers could be accommodated by the temporary lodging within the Paso Robles area. Given the short construction duration (less than 5 months), it is unlikely that workers not sourced locally would permanently relocate to the area. As described in Chapter 2, ultimate buildout of the Estrella Substation would follow a similar construction process to that described for the Proposed Project and, therefore, is expected to extend over similar construction durations and require similar numbers of workers for installation, testing, and commissioning of additional equipment (e.g., transformer, breakers, switches, etc.) within the 230 and 70 kV substations. As discussed under Impact POP-1, buildout of the Proposed Project and reasonably foreseeable distribution components would accommodate anticipated growth in the Paso Robles area, but would not cause the growth or be inconsistent with the San Luis Obispo County and City of Paso Robles General Plan Housing Elements. Similarly, ultimate buildout of the Estrella Substation could further support possible growth in the Paso Robles area into the future; however, it would not directly cause this growth. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant**.

The reasonably foreseeable distribution components would be installed primarily along existing roads in agricultural areas and/or along SR 46. Ultimate buildout of Estrella Substation would involve facilities located primarily within the existing Estrella Substation site (additional distribution feeders and 70 kV power lines that could be supported through ultimate buildout are speculative as routes are unknown at this time). No existing housing is located in areas which could be displaced by the reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and the ultimate buildout of the substation would not displace housing or people. Therefore, **no impact** would occur under significance criterion B.

Alternatives

No Project Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, no new substation or new/reconductored power line would be constructed. Therefore, no construction workers would temporarily or permanently relocate to the Paso Robles area and there would be no potential for inducement of substantial unplanned population growth. Population growth, as anticipated by city planners, would still likely occur in the Paso Robles area; however, this growth would be less easily accommodated by PG&E without the Proposed Project. Given that the No Project Alternative would not involve construction of any new facilities relative to baseline conditions, there would be no potential to displace substantial numbers of people or housing. Therefore, **no impact** would occur under significance criteria A and B.

Alternative SS-1: Bonel Ranch Substation Site

Construction of Alternative SS-1 would take slightly longer (approximately 1 month longer for construction of the 230 kV interconnection) than the proposed Estrella Substation, but would require the same number of construction workers. As such, this alternative would have similar potential to temporarily induce a small amount of population growth from workers potentially relocating to the area for the duration of the construction period. Alternative SS-1 would provide the same electric distribution capacity benefits to the Paso Robles area as described above for the Proposed Project under Impact POP-1. Like the Proposed Project, Alternative SS-1 would accommodate the anticipated growth in Paso Robles, although it would not cause this growth. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant**.

No homes are located on the 15-acre portion of the Bonel Ranch parcel; therefore, no people or housing would be directly displaced by construction of the alternative. As such, **no impact** would occur under significance criterion B.

Alternative PLR-1A: Estrella Route to Estrella Substation

Due to the increased length of Alternative PLR-1A compared to the proposed 70 kV power line route, it would require a substantially longer construction schedule (16 months longer than the proposed 70 kV power line's 18-month construction schedule). However, the daily number of required construction workers is expected to remain the same (30). As described in Section 4.14.3, there are more than 20 hotels/motels spread throughout the city and a 5 percent vacancy rate in permanent housing resources in the city. These units would be expected to accommodate the out-of-area construction workers temporarily during the construction period, as well as any workers that could permanently relocate to the area. Alternative PLR-1A would serve the same function as the proposed 70 kV power line and, when paired with the Estrella Substation, would accommodate the anticipated population growth in the Paso Robles area (see discussion under Impact POP-1). Overall, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant**.

No existing houses or structures would require removal or relocation, and no houses or people would be permanently displaced under Alternative PLR-1A. However, construction activities could temporarily affect some existing homes and structures along the proposed route (impacts would be similar to those for the Proposed Project, as discussed under Impact POP-2). As the

construction effects would be temporary, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

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

Alternative PLR-1C would be similar in length to Alternative PLR-1A and would require a similarly extended construction duration compared to the Proposed Project. Despite the extended construction schedule, construction of Alternative PLR-1C would require the same daily number of construction workers (30) as the proposed 70 kV power line. The 20 hotels/motels located in the city would be expected to accommodate any non-local construction workers temporarily during the construction period. Even if some workers were to permanently relocate, the 5 percent vacancy rate in existing housing units in Paso Robles would provide housing opportunities to the construction workers. Due to the small number of workers needed for the job, this would not result in substantial population growth. Alternative PLR-1C would serve the same function as the proposed 70 kV power line and, when paired with Alternative SS-1, would accommodate the anticipated growth in the Paso Robles area (see Impact POP-1 for detailed discussion). Overall, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant**.

No existing houses or structures would require removal or relocation, and no houses or people would be permanently displaced, for Alternative PLR-1C. However, construction activities could temporarily affect some existing homes and structures along the proposed route (impacts would be similar to those for the Proposed Project, as discussed under Impact POP-2). As the construction effects would be temporary, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

Alternative PLR-3: Strategic Undergrounding (Option 1 & 2)

Alternative PLR-3 would involve an extended construction schedule for this segment of power line compared to building the line overhead (i.e., Proposed Project), but would require a similar or reduced number of daily construction workers (six or fewer depending on construction phase). As discussed under Impact POP-1 for the Proposed Project, construction workers sourced from non-local areas would be accommodated by the 20 hotels/motels located throughout the city. Additionally, should any workers decide to permanently relocate, the 5 percent vacancy rate in existing housing units would provide housing opportunities for these individuals. Even if they were to permanently relocate to the area, the small construction workforce needed for Alternative PLR-3 would not result in substantial population growth. Once installed, the underground 70 kV power line segment would function the same as the proposed 70 kV power line and would allow electricity from the Estrella Substation to be transmitted to Paso Robles Substation. Therefore, it would accommodate future anticipated population growth in the same manner as the Proposed Project (see Impact POP-1 for detailed discussion). Overall, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant**.

Alternative PLR-3 would be installed largely within existing roadways, as well as other undeveloped areas, and would not require permanent displacement of any houses or people. Construction activities may temporarily impact some existing structures located north of Lake Place at the northern end of the Alternative PLR-3 alignments (Option 1 & 2), but these impacts would not be permanent, lasting only for the duration of the construction period. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

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

Alternative SE-1A would require a moderately extended construction duration (1 month longer) compared to the proposed Estrella Substation due to the longer length of the 230kV interconnection. The number of construction workers would remain the same, and the non-local workers would not be expected to permanently relocate to the Paso Robles area. As discussed above, existing temporary and permanent housing units are adequate to accommodate the construction workers for the duration of the construction period, as well as any construction workers that would choose to permanently relocate to the area. Given the small construction workforce (up to 15 workers per day), this would not result in substantial population growth. Alternative SE-1A would provide the same function as the proposed Estrella Substation in terms of increasing transmission system resiliency and potentially providing increased distribution capacity, such as to accommodate the future anticipated growth (see Impact POP-1 for detailed discussion). Overall, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant**.

Construction of Alternative SE-1A would temporarily impact an agricultural structure on the periphery of the site, but would not permanently displace any housing or people. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

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

Due to its shorter length, Alternative SE-PLR-2 would have a shorter construction duration (approximately 9 months shorter) compared to the proposed 70 kV power line. Construction of Alternative SE-PLR-2 would require the same daily number of workers (30) as the proposed 70 kV power line. As discussed above, the 20 hotels/motels located in the city would be expected to accommodate any non-local construction workers temporarily during the construction period. Even if some workers were to permanently relocate, the 5 percent vacancy rate in existing housing units in Paso Robles would provide housing opportunities to the construction workers. Due to the small number of workers needed for the job, this would not result in substantial population growth. Alternative SE-PLR-2, which would only be implemented in parallel with Alternative SE-1A, could provide the same functions as the Proposed Project in terms of accommodating future anticipated population growth in the Paso Robles area (see Impact POP-1 for detailed discussion). Overall, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant**.

Alternative SE-PLR-2 would not require removal or demolition of any existing housing, or permanent displacement of any housing or people. Construction activities could temporarily impact some existing homes and structures similar to the Proposed Project 70 kV power line (see discussion under Impact POP-2). As these construction effects would be temporary, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

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

Construction of FTM BESSs under Alternative BS-2 would likely require a relatively modest number of workers (likely no more than the 12 to 15 workers), many of whom may be employed from local areas. As discussed above, the 20 hotels/motels located throughout the city of Paso Robles would reasonably accommodate the temporary construction workforce from non-local areas. Further, should any construction workers permanently relocate to the area, housing units are available. Given the small number of workers likely to be needed for construction, even if workers were to permanently relocate to the area, this would not result in substantial

population growth. Functionally, Alternative BS-2 would accomplish similar objectives to the Proposed Project, as it would enable the distribution grid to serve additional capacity. Therefore, it would accommodate future anticipated growth in a similar manner to the Proposed Project (see discussion under Impact POP-1).

For those potential FTM BESS sites that are evaluated as part of the EIR, all FTM sites are vacant (with the exception of existing substations within identified parcels) and installation of BESSs would not require or result in displacement of housing or people.

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

Construction of individual BTM solar and storage facilities would require minimal numbers of construction workers, many of whom would likely be local to the area. While specific numbers of construction workers needed for installation of individual BTM facilities are unknown, the small-scale nature of these projects would not reasonably result in substantial population growth due to construction workers potentially relocating to the area. Additionally, as discussed above, existing temporary and permanent housing units are available in the Paso Robles area for any construction workers that may require housing associated with Alternative BS-3. Once installed, BTM facilities would operate unattended and would require relatively infrequent maintenance and repairs; as such, no substantial population growth would occur due to operation and maintenance of these facilities. On a cumulative level, installation of multiple BTM facilities would reduce loading within the Paso Robles area and could thereby avoid conventional distribution system investments (e.g., new distribution feeders). In this respect, Alternative BS-3 would serve a similar function to the Proposed Project in accommodating future anticipated population growth (see Impact POP-1 for detailed discussion).

Given that BTM facilities would be installed at the discretion of individual property owners and would primarily be integrated into existing buildings, no housing or people would be permanently displaced as a result of Alternative BS-3 implementation.

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.

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