

## 4.17 Transportation

### 4.17.1 Introduction

This section summarizes the regulatory and environmental settings related to transportation and presents the impact analysis methodology and thresholds. On this basis, the section evaluates the potential impacts of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives on vehicle traffic operations and other transportation modes during construction, operation, and maintenance activities.

### 4.17.2 Transportation Terminology

Key terms used in this section to describe transportation are described below.

*Arterial roads* are roads that provide for mobility within the county and its cities, carrying through-traffic on continuous routes and joining major traffic generators, freeways, expressways, super arterials, and other arterials. Access to abutting private property and intersecting local streets is generally restricted.

*Average daily traffic (ADT)* is the average number of vehicles that travel through a specific point of a road over a short duration time period (often 7 days or less). It is estimated by dividing the total daily volumes during a specified time period by the number of days in the period (Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] 2018).

*Capacity* is the maximum sustainable hourly flow rate at which vehicles reasonably can be expected to traverse a point or a lane on a roadway during a given time period, typically 15-minute intervals under prevailing roadway, traffic, and control conditions. It is expressed in vehicles per hour per lane (FHWA 2018).

*Capacity utilization* is the extent to which a roadway's capacity is being used on a daily basis, measured as the percentage of the roadway's capacity that is used by the average daily traffic (City of Paso Robles 2011).

*Class I bikeway* is a bike path or multi-use path that provides a completely separated right-of-way designated for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians with crossflows by motorists minimized (San Luis Obispo County 2016).

*Class II bikeway* is a bike lane that provides a restricted right-of-way designated for the exclusive or semi-exclusive use of bicycles with through travel by motor vehicles or pedestrians prohibited, but with vehicle parking and crossflows by pedestrians and motorists permitted (San Luis Obispo County 2016).

*Class III bikeway* is a bike route that provides a right-of-way on-street or off-street, designated by signs or permanent markings and shared with pedestrians or motorists. Bike routes provide continuity to other bicycle facilities (San Luis Obispo County 2016).

*Collector roads* are roads that collect and channel traffic to arterials (San Luis Obispo County 2014).

*Delay* is the additional travel time experienced by a vehicle or traveler that results from the inability to travel at optimal speed, or from stops, due to congestion or traffic control.

*Local roads* are roads that provide direct access to abutting property and connect with other local roads, collectors, arterials, super arterials, and expressways. Local roads are typically developed as two-lane, undivided roadways and provide access to abutting private property and intersecting streets.

*Vehicle miles traveled (VMT)* is the total miles traveled by individual vehicles in a specific area (e.g., a route, a functional road classification, or geographic area) over a given period of time. VMT is a method for determining the amount of GHG emissions due to vehicular travel associated with a project, as well as safety, and mobility (FHWA 2018).

### 4.17.3 Regulatory Setting

#### **Federal Laws, Regulations, and Policies**

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

#### **State Laws, Regulations, and Policies**

##### ***California Department of Transportation***

Caltrans manages the state highway system and ramp interchange intersections and also performs rail transportation planning. Caltrans implements the statutes contained in the California Vehicle Code, including those pertaining to licensing, size, weight, and load of vehicles operated on highways; safe operation of vehicles; and the transportation of hazardous materials. The Caltrans District 5 Encroachment Permits Office in San Luis Obispo issues encroachment permits for activities and encroachments within, under, or over the state highway right of way in the San Luis Obispo area. Authority for Caltrans to control encroachments within the state highway right of way is contained in the Streets and Highways Code Section 660 et seq.

Construction in rights of way subject to Caltrans Encroachment Permit requirements typically requires a Traffic Control Plan in compliance with Caltrans' California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). As part of these requirements, there are provisions for coordination with local emergency services, training for flagman for emergency vehicles traveling through the work zone, temporary lane separators that have sloping sides to facilitate crossover by emergency vehicles, and vehicle storage and staging areas for emergency vehicles. MUTCD requirements also provide for construction work during off-peak hours and flaggers (Caltrans 2014).

### ***Senate Bill 743***

Governor Jerry Brown signed SB (SB) 743 on September 27, 2013, which mandated a change in the way that public agencies evaluate transportation impacts of projects under CEQA, focusing on VMT rather than level of service and other delay-based metrics. SB 743 states that new methodologies under CEQA are needed for evaluating transportation impacts that are better able to reduce GHG emissions and traffic-related air pollution, promoting the development of a multimodal transportation system, and providing clean, efficient access to destinations. It further intended to balance the need for level of service standards with the state's need to build infill housing and mixed-use commercial developments within walking distance of mass transit facilities and downtowns or town centers. SB 743 allowed for measurements of transportation impacts that could include VMT, VMT per capita, automobile trip generation rates, or automobile trips generated. Accordingly, SB 743 required the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to amend the CEQA Guidelines to reflect these changes.

### ***CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3***

In response to SB 743, OPR added Section 15064.3 of the CEQA Guidelines, as part of a comprehensive Guidelines update, adopted by the California Natural Resources Agency in December 2018. Section 15064.3 describes specific considerations for evaluating a project's transportation impacts and identifies VMT as the most appropriate measure to determine the significance of transportation impacts. Section 15064.3 generally states that a project's effect on automobile delay shall not constitute a significant environmental impact under CEQA. The specific criteria for analyzing transportation impacts are provided in Section 15064.3, subdivision (b) of the CEQA Guidelines. In general, SB 743 indicates that the total VMT that exceed an applicable threshold of significance may indicate a significant impact.

### ***Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA***

In response to SB 743 and the addition of Section 15064.3 to the CEQA Guidelines, OPR adopted the *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* (Technical Advisory) in December 2018 to provide technical recommendations on methods for assessing VMT, thresholds of significance, and mitigation measures. The recommendations in the Technical Advisory are intended to provide guidance to agencies and the public for assessing VMT-related transportation impacts under CEQA. Details of the recommended thresholds of significance from the Technical Advisory are provided in Section 4.17.5, below.

## **4.17.4 Environmental Setting**

### **Vehicle Access**

Vehicle access is provided to the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives areas primarily by regional highways, local arterials, and local collector roads, as described below. Figure 4.17-1 shows these roadways in relation to the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives.

## ***Regional Highways***

**U.S. Highway 101** (US 101) is a central feature of the transportation system in the Paso Robles area. Access to this highway is important to local businesses, which are concentrated along the US 101 corridor. This highway is also a major north-south freeway connecting the major population centers of Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area. In the Proposed Project vicinity, US 101 is a four-lane freeway with two lanes of travel in each direction. Interchanges on US 101 in the vicinity of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives include those located at Niblick Road, 24<sup>th</sup> Street/State Route 46, Pine Street, a northbound on-ramp at 13<sup>th</sup> Street, and a northbound off-ramp at Paso Robles Street. Alternatives PLR-1A and PLR-1C propose improvements in the vicinity of an unsignalized four-way intersection of ~~US 101~~ North River Road with Wellsona Road.

**State Route 46** (SR 46) is the major east-west corridor in San Luis Obispo County that connects the Central Coast to the Central Valley, thus traffic on SR 46 is largely interregional, including substantial recreational, tourist and truck traffic (San Luis Obispo Council of Governments [SLOCOG] 2019). The City of Paso Robles, in collaboration with Caltrans and SLOCOG, is proposing to develop a new SR 46 overcrossing bridge at Union Road. As shown in Figure 4.17-1, SR 46 passes through roughly the middle of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives area. The Proposed Project 70 kV new power line would cross SR 46 at Paso Robles Boulevard/Union Road, while the Proposed Project's 70 kV reconductoring segment would cross SR 46 near River Road. The northern reasonably foreseeable distribution new line segment would be installed ~~within the~~ along one side of the SR 46 right of way adjacent to and northeast of Hunter Ranch Golf Course. The 70 kV power line under Alternative PLR-1A would cross SR 46 near the intersection with Branch Road.

## ***Local Arterials***

**Buena Vista Drive** is a two-lane road located in northern Paso Robles and unincorporated San Luis Obispo County that includes both north-south and east-west segments. Within Paso Robles it is an arterial (City of Paso Robles 2019). North of Circle B Road, a portion of Buena Vista Drive is identified as a collector in the Salinas River Sub-Area of the North County Planning Area (San Luis Obispo County 2014). The Proposed Project's new 70kV power line segment would follow a short east-west segment of Buena Vista Drive that is parallel to and north of Circle B Road.

**Golden Hill Road** is a north-south arterial that runs from Creston Road to Circle B Road. Golden Hill Road ranges from a two-lane to four-lane arterial. In the area of Golden Hill Industrial Park and Cava Robles RV Resort, through which the Proposed Project's 70 kV power line would pass, Golden Hill Road is two lanes. The Proposed Project's 70 kV power line would primarily follow the private portion of Golden Hill Road north of San Antonio Winery north to Lake Place. As shown in Figure 2-7 (Chapter 2, *Project Description*), the primary construction staging area for the Proposed Project 70 kV power line would be located off of Golden Hill Road south of Wisteria Lane. The Alternative PLR-3 undergrounding segment would follow a similar route as the Proposed Project 70 kV route along a portion of Golden Hill Road.

**Niblick Road** serves as the third major crossing of the Salinas River in Paso Robles, serving as an east-west four-lane arterial from Spring Street past Creston Road (City of Paso Robles 2019). Niblick Road is just south of the southernmost end of the Proposed Project's 70 kV reconductoring segment. The Paso Robles Substation is located just north of Niblick Road (at

River Road), which forms the terminus of the reconductoring segments under the Proposed Project and Alternatives PLR-1A and PLR-1C, as well as the interconnection point for the 70 kV power line under Alternative SE-PLR-2.

**River Road** is primarily a two-lane undivided north-south collector road, which transitions to a four-lane arterial in the vicinity of its intersection with Niblick Road, and from its intersection with 13th Street/Creston Road to its intersection with Union Road (City of Paso Robles 2019). The existing San Miguel-Paso Robles 70 kV Power Line that would be reducted under the Proposed Project and Alternatives PLR-1A and PLR-1C follows River Road (with the pole line alignment on the easterly side of River Road). Under Alternative SE-PLR-2, the new 70kV power line connecting the expanded Templeton Substation (Alternative SE-1A) to Paso Robles Substation would follow River Road from near Lothar Lane north to the intersection with Niblick Road.

**Union Road** is an east-west two-lane road that runs generally parallel to and south of SR 46. Within Paso Robles, it is designated as an arterial (City of Paso Robles 2019). In unincorporated San Luis Obispo County, it is designated as an arterial from Priska Drive to Penman Springs Road. East of Penman Springs Road, it is a collector (County of San Luis Obispo 2014). The proposed Estrella Substation would be located off of Union Road in a rural area east of Penman Springs Road. The Proposed Project's 70 kV power line would closely follow Union Road from roughly the Huer Huero Creek crossing west to the intersection with Paso Robles Boulevard. One of the reasonably foreseeable additional 21/12 kV pad-mounted transformers would be installed along Union Road east of Branch Road.

### **Local Collectors**

**El Pomar Drive** runs generally east-west and is identified as a collector in the El Pomar-Estrella Sub-Area of the North County Planning Area (San Luis Obispo County 2014). The new 230/70 kV substation immediately adjacent to the existing Templeton Substation that would be installed under Alternative SE-1A would be located on El Pomar Drive, as shown in Figure 4.17-1.

**Jardine Road** is a north-south road identified as a collector in the Salinas River Sub-Area of the North County Planning Area (San Luis Obispo County 2014). Portions of the Alternative PLR-1A and PLR-1C 70 kV alignments would follow Jardine Road north of its intersection with Tower Road.

**Wellsona Road** is an east-west road identified as a collector in the Salinas River Sub-Area of the North County Planning Area (San Luis Obispo County 2014). Portions of the Alternative PLR-1A and PLR-1C alignments would follow Wellsona Road between Airport Road and River Road.

### **Roadway Capacity Utilization**

Table 4.17-1 presents information regarding the capacity utilization of roadways in the City of Paso Robles and within proximity to the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives. As shown in Table 4.17-1, none of the City roadways were experiencing congestion at levels that exceeded the roadway capacity in 2017. Utilization of Niblick Road east of Spring Street was projected to reach 93 percent of capacity in 2045.

**Table 4.17-1. City of Paso Robles Roadway Capacity Utilization under Current and Future Conditions**

Roadway Segment		Year 2017		Year 2045 <sup>1</sup>	
		ADT <sup>2</sup>	Capacity Utilization	ADT	Capacity Utilization
Buena Vista Drive	North of SR 46	5,520	25%	9,300	43%
Golden Hill Road	South of Dallons Drive	5,730	32%	10,100	27%
	South of Union Road	11,980	55%	17,100	46%
	South of Rolling Hills Road	9,320	43%	14,600	82%
Niblick Road	East of Spring Street	31,430	84%	<b>34,600</b>	<b>93%</b>
	East of Quarterhorse Lane	19,620	52%	23,800	64%
	East of Melody Drive	15,140	40%	21,400	57%
South River Road	North of Serenade	12,710	34%	14,200	38%
	North of Navajo Avenue	12,750	72%	12,800	72%
Union Road	East of Prospect Avenue	5,990	34%	12,700	72%
	East of Golden Hill Road	8,640	40%	16,500	76%

**Note:**

1. Year 2045 conditions include proposed improvements in included in City of Paso Robles General Plan *Circulation Element* (2019).
2. ADT = Average daily traffic during a typical weekday.

Source: *City of Paso Robles 2019*

Capacity utilization along US 101 and SR 46 in the area of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives is projected to be more constrained compared to the City of Paso Robles roadways shown in Table 4.17-1. The City of Paso Robles *Circulation Element* (2019) states that degradation of US 101 mainline operations by Year 2045 and beyond is anticipated because of future growth within and outside San Luis Obispo County, as well as the addition of traffic from proposed land uses in the City of Paso Robles General Plan. Similarly, future traffic volumes along the SR 46 East corridor (from US 101 to Airport Road) are expected to exceed capacity during certain times of the day; typically the morning and afternoon two-hour commute periods (City of Paso Robles 2019).

### Existing Transit Service

Public transit service in the Paso Robles area is provided by the San Luis Obispo Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and Amtrak. RTA services include fixed-route bus lines, paratransit, dial-a-ride/curb-to-curb transportation, and Paso Express bus service. RTA transit routes in the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives area include the Route 9 fixed-route bus line, and the Paso Express bus route, described below.

**RTA Route 9** provides public transit service from San Miguel to Paso Robles, Templeton, Atascadero, Santa Margarita, and San Luis Obispo, with both weekday service and more limited weekend service (San Luis Obispo RTA 2019). Route 9 provides service along the following roadways in the vicinity of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives:

- US 101, from Paso Robles to points north and south of the City;
- SR 46, from US 101 to Buena Vista Drive (weekday service only), and
- Buena Vista Drive, from SR 46 to River Oaks Drive (weekday service only).

**RTA Paso Express** provides public transit service in Paso Robles, with both weekday service and more limited weekend service (San Luis Obispo RTA 2019). The Paso Express provides service along the following roadways in the vicinity of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives:

- Niblick Road, from Spring Street to Rambouillet Road, and
- Creston Road, from 13<sup>th</sup> Street to its intersection with Niblick Road/Sherwood Road.

Amtrak operates a railroad station at 800 Pine Street in Paso Robles, west of US 101. Amtrak's service to Paso Robles consists of the Coast Starlight line, which provides service from Los Angeles to Seattle. The stops closest to Paso Robles are San Luis Obispo, to the south; and Salinas, to the north. The Paso Robles Amtrak station has a passenger waiting area and is unstaffed (Amtrak 2019).

## Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Within Paso Robles, many streets already have sidewalks, especially through the neighborhoods and commercial areas (City of Paso Robles 2018). Existing bicycle facilities and multi-use paths located in the vicinity of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives include the following:

**Niblick Road** in Paso Robles includes a Class II bikeway (bike lane) from its intersection with Spring Street to the intersection of Niblick Road and Creston Road (City of Paso Robles 2018).

**River Road** includes a Class III bikeway (bike route) within unincorporated San Luis Obispo County from the Paso Robles city boundary at Creston Road south to the intersection of River Road and Neal Spring Road (County of San Luis Obispo 2016).

**Union Road** includes a Class II bikeway from its intersection with River Road and Creston Road/13<sup>th</sup> Street to Montebello Oaks Drive.

**Creston Road** includes a Class II bikeway from its intersection with River Road/Union Road and 13<sup>th</sup> Street to Golden Hill Road.

**Neal Spring Road** includes a Class III bikeway within unincorporated San Luis Obispo County from the its intersection with River Road to the intersection of Neal Spring Road and El Pomar Drive (County of San Luis Obispo 2016).

**El Pomar Drive** includes a Class III bikeway within unincorporated San Luis Obispo County from the its intersection with Neal Spring Road to the intersection of El Pomar Drive and South Main Street (County of San Luis Obispo 2016).

Along **Charolais Road**, the City maintains a Class I bikeway (bike/multi-use path) from Creston Road east to River Road, where the bike path continues west across River Road and along a drainageway to Riverbank Lane (City of Paso Robles 2018).

**The River Walk** is a Class I bikeway (bike/multi-use path) in Paso Robles located along the east bank of the Salinas River, west of River Road, from south of Niblick Road to Union Road. The River Walk passes beneath the Niblick Road and Creston Road bridges that cross the Salinas River.

### Existing Commute Trips

The mean travel time to work for Paso Robles residents is 23.2 minutes, with 77.9 percent of the work force driving alone to work, 12.4 percent carpooling, and 5.5 percent working from home (U.S. Census 2017). Public transportation, walking, bicycling, and taxicab/motorcycle/other is each used by less than two percent of the Paso Robles work force (U.S. Census 2017). The prime daily commute period (i.e., morning rush hour) is 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. (U.S. Census 2017). Table 4.17-2 identifies employment centers in the Paso Robles area and the major roads providing access to employment centers from residential areas.

**Table 4.17-2. Paso Robles Employment Centers and Access Roadways**

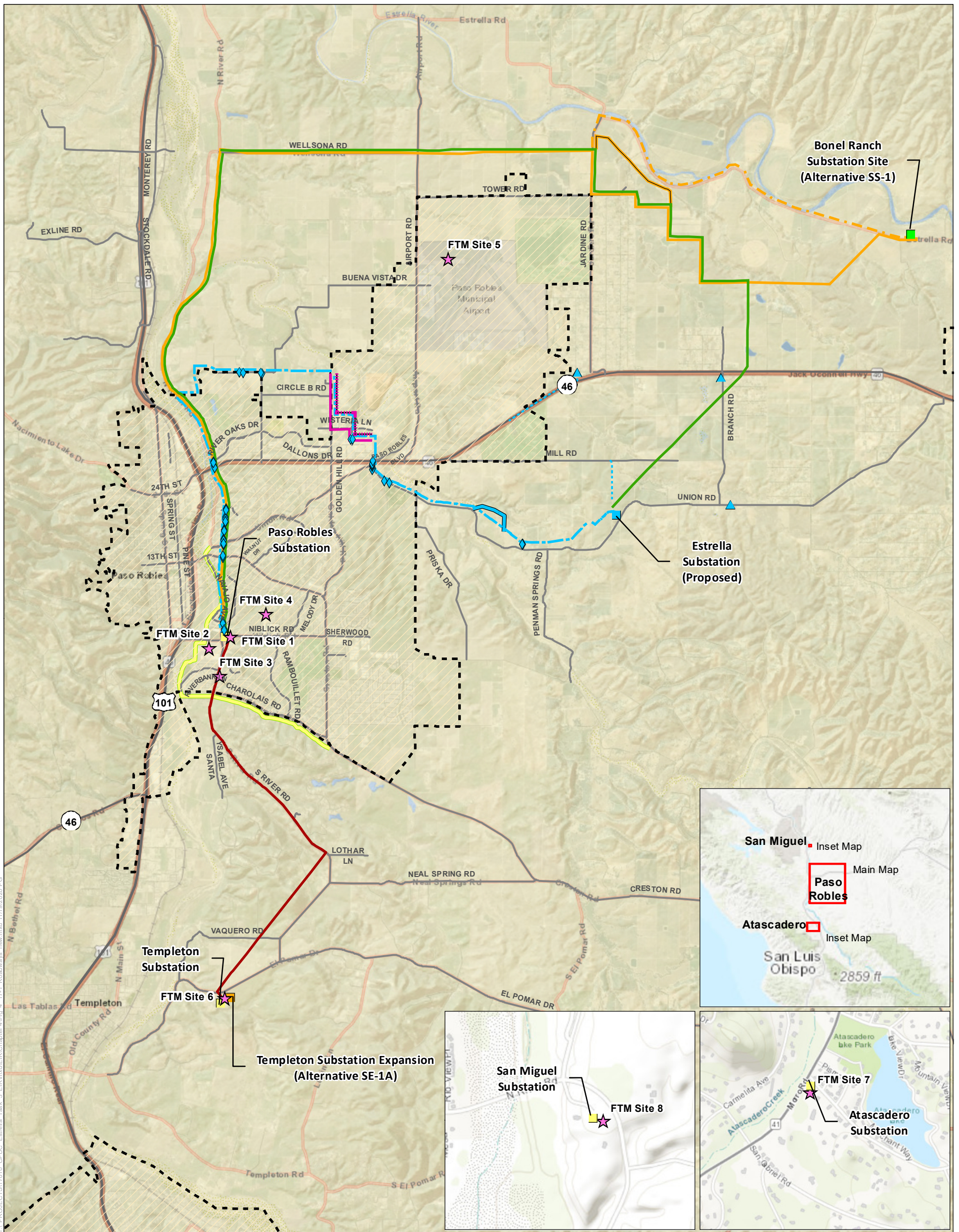
Employment Centers	Major Roadways Connecting Employment Centers and Residential Areas	
	North-South	East-West
<b><u>Uptown</u></b> – the historic downtown, west of the Salinas River	US 101 River Road	SR 46 Union Road Creston Road/13 <sup>th</sup> Street Niblick Road/1 <sup>st</sup> Street
<b><u>Northeastern Business Area</u></b> – commercial areas near the Paso Robles Airport, generally north of SR 46 and east of Golden Hill Road	US 101 Golden Hill Road	SR 46 Union Road
<b><u>Town Center South</u></b> – the southernmost area of Paso Robles, south of 1 <sup>st</sup> Street, along US 101 and South Vine Street	US 101 River Road South Vine Street Spring Street	Niblick Road/1 <sup>st</sup> Street

Sources: City of Paso Robles 2018; City of Paso Robles 2019; SLOCOG 2014



Two park-and-ride lots served by public transit are located in Paso Robles, providing parking areas for public transit users and also serving as neutral meeting locations for carpools and vanpools. Paso Robles Park & Ride Lot A is located at the Multi Modal Station at Pine and 7th streets, while the Paso Robles Walmart Park & Ride Lot is located in the Walmart parking lot at Niblick and South River roads (San Luis Obispo Rideshare 2019).

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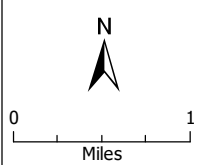
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**Figure 4.17-1**  
Roadways

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Proposed Project</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: blue;">■</span> Estrella Substation</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">---</span> 70kV Route</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">---</span> 70 kV Minor Route Variation 1</li> </ul> <p><b>Reasonably Foreseeable Distribution Components</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: blue;">---</span> New Distribution Line Segments</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">▲</span> Additional 21/12 kV Pad-Mounted Transformer</li> </ul> <p><b>Existing Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Existing Substations</li> </ul> | <p><b>Project Alternatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: purple;">★</span> Front-of-the-Meter (FTM) Battery Storage Sites (Alternative BS-2)</li> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> Alternative SS-1: Bonel Ranch Substation Site</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">■</span> Alternative SE-1A: Templeton Substation Expansion - 230/70 kV Substation</li> <li><span style="color: green;">---</span> Alternative PLR-1A: Estrella Route to Estrella Substation</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">---</span> Alternative PLR-1C: Estrella Route to Bonel Ranch, Option 1</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">---</span> Alternative PLR-1C: Minor Route Variation 1</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">---</span> Alternative PLR-1C: Minor Route Variation 2</li> <li><span style="color: pink;">---</span> Alternative PLR-3A: Strategic Undergrounding, Option 1</li> <li><span style="color: pink;">---</span> Alternative PLR-3B: Strategic Undergrounding, Option 2</li> <li><span style="color: red;">---</span> Alternative SE-PLR-2: Templeton-Paso South River Road Route</li> </ul> | <p><b>Transportation Features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: blue;">◆</span> Temporary Crossing Structure Work Area</li> <li><span style="border: 1px dashed black; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> Paso Robles City Boundary</li> <li><span style="color: grey;">---</span> Relevant Roadways</li> <li><span style="color: yellow;">---</span> Multi-Use Path</li> </ul> |
|---|---|--|

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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## 4.17.5 Impact Analysis

### Methodology

Transportation impacts were evaluated in the context of local and regional circulation patterns, VMT, existing roadway configurations, and local traffic operations. Details about the specific methodology used for analyzing VMT impacts is discussed under Impact TR-2 below. Potential impacts were compared to requirements and strategies of applicable plans and policies related to circulation, emergency access and evacuation. The criteria for determining the significance of potential impacts are outlined 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 transportation if they would:

- A. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities;
- B. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b);
- C. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment); or
- D. Result in inadequate emergency access or interfere with an adopted emergency evacuation plan.

### Environmental Impacts

#### ***Proposed Project***

#### **Impact TR-1: Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities – *Less than Significant with Mitigation***

Applicable plans include the circulation elements of the County of San Luis Obispo and City of Paso Robles General Plans. In general, the plans focus more on long-term transportation needs, rather than short-term, construction-related effects. For example, the *Land Use and Circulation Elements* of County of San Luis Obispo General Plan, Framework for Inland Areas (County of San Luis Obispo 2015) seeks to “plan transportation system improvements to provide for, but not exceed, the capacities that are needed to serve the travel demand generated by the year 2010 population...” (Goal 2), and “coordinate the transportation system between different modes of travel...” (Goal 4). The *Circulation Element* of the City of Paso Robles General Plan (City of Paso Robles 2019) similarly seeks to “establish a safe, balanced, efficient, and multimodal circulation system, focusing on the mobility of people, and preserving the City’s small town character and quality of life” (Goal CE-1). The City of Paso Robles’s *Circulation Element* also seeks to reduce

VMT and provide safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access to all areas of the City. See Appendix A for additional description of the local plans related to transportation.

For the purposes of this analysis, the Proposed Project would be considered to conflict with the County and City *Circulation Elements* if it would add a substantial number of vehicle trips to the area, during construction and/or operation, such as significantly affect roadway capacity, or if the Proposed Project were to otherwise cause substantial delays. Additionally, the Proposed Project would conflict with these plans if it were to adversely affect pedestrian and bicycle access.

### **Construction**

Construction of the Proposed Project would result in a temporary increase in vehicle traffic along nearby roadways. Specifically, construction of the Estrella Substation would result in increased traffic primarily along Union Road in the immediate vicinity of the substation site, as well as on SR 46 and US 101, due to daily worker and truck trips to and from the Estrella Substation site. As shown in Table 4.17-3, worker and truck trips would vary by construction phase, some of which may overlap. Truck trips would result from deliveries of construction materials and water to the Estrella Substation site, as well as off-haul of waste materials. The delivery and application of water for construction and dust control would be the primary source of truck trips during construction of the Estrella Substation (NEET West and PG&E 2017). Construction of the Proposed Project's 70 kV power line would result in similar impacts on the transportation system from adding worker and truck trips. The transportation impacts of 70 kV power line construction would be dispersed throughout much of the City of Paso Robles and affected areas of unincorporated San Luis Obispo County.

**Table 4.17-3. Estimated Daily Worker and Truck Round-Trips for Construction of the Proposed Project**

<b>Construction Phase</b>	<b>Daily Worker RTs</b>	<b>Daily Truck RTs</b>	<b># of Days</b>	<b>Max. # of Daily RTs</b>
<b><u>Estrella Substation</u></b>				
<b><i>230 kV Substation</i></b>				
Access Roads	10	6	12	16
Site Prep / Grading / Entrance Road / Culverts / Drainage	10	15	18	25
Fence and Gate Installation	5	2-14	12	19
Foundation Construction	2-12	1-16	36	28
Ground Grid / Conduit Installation	5	1-14	24	19
Steel / Bus Erection	5	2-15	24	20
Install Yard Rock	8	9-22	18	30
Transformer & Equipment Delivery and Installation	5-8	1-14	30	22
Control Enclosure Delivery and Installation	6	1	12	7

<b>Construction Phase</b>	<b>Daily Worker RTs</b>	<b>Daily Truck RTs</b>	<b># of Days</b>	<b>Max. # of Daily RTs</b>
Remaining Equipment Delivery and Installation	2-5	1-14	24	19
Cable Installation and Termination	5	1	12	6
Testing and Commissioning	2-5	1-14	30	19
Cleanup and Restoration	3	1-14	18	17
<b><i>70 kV Substation</i></b>				
Mobilization	6	3-4	12	10
Foundation Construction	1-10	5-6	30	16
Ground Grid / Conduit Installation	5	1-4	24	9
Steel / Bus Erection	5	1-4	24	9
Install Rock Yard	6	8	18	14
Equipment Delivery and Installation	6	4-5	18	11
Control Enclosure Delivery and Installation	3-5	2	18	7
Cable Installation and Termination	3-5	1-2	18	7
Testing and Commissioning	5	1	18	6
<b><i>230 kV Transmission Interconnection</i></b>				
Mobilization	7-8	6	24	14
Tower Installation and Removal of Tower	10	6-7	48	17
Conductor and Telecommunications Installation	15	6	24	21
Restoration	5	5	6	10
<b><u>70 kV Power Line</u></b>				
<b><i>Reconductoring Segment</i></b>				
Site Development	6	5	24	11
Conductor Spreading / Pole Installation / Transfer Distribution / Pole Removal	9	7	86	16
Conductor Installation	9	5	76	14
Clean-up and Site Restoration	6	3	6	9
<b><i>New 70 kV Power Line Segment</i></b>				
Site Preparation / Mobilization	6	5	6	11
Pole Foundation Installations / Pole Installations	9	6-8	192	17
Conductor, Fiber, and Common Neutral Installation	9	5	48	14

Construction Phase	Daily Worker RTs	Daily Truck RTs	# of Days	Max. # of Daily RTs
Clean-up and Site Restoration	6	4	24	10

Notes: kV= kilovolt; RT = round-trips

Source: NEET West and PG&E 2017; NEET West and PG&E 2020

The period of greatest construction traffic impact for the Estrella Substation is anticipated during the second week of the second month of construction, when the following activities are scheduled: fence and gate installation and foundation construction of the 230 kV substation, foundation construction of the 70 kV substation, and tower installation and removal at the 230 kV transmission interconnection. During this period, approximately 122 daily one-way vehicle trips (i.e., 61 round trips) would occur. Based on the overall Proposed Project schedule, this period lines up with scheduled conductor spreading, pole installation, transfer distribution, and pole removal work for the 70 kV reconductoring segment, which could generate up to 32 daily one-way vehicle trips (i.e., 16 round trips) (see Table 4.17-3). As such, up to 154 daily one-way vehicle trips could be generated by the Proposed Project during the peak activities.

This maximum number of daily vehicle trips associated with Proposed Project construction was compared to capacity utilization of roadways within the City of Paso Robles to gain an understanding of the Proposed Project's potential impacts on roadway capacity. The analysis conservatively assumed that all trips generated by the construction of the 70 kV power line would utilize all roadway segments in the area, while all trips generated by the construction of Estrella Substation would utilize the relevant segment of Union Road. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.17-4.

**Table 4.17-4. Estimated City of Paso Robles Roadway Capacity Utilization with Proposed Project Construction Trips**

Roadway Segment		Existing Conditions		Existing plus Project	
		ADT	Capacity Utilization	ADT	Capacity Utilization
Buena Vista Drive	North of SR 46	5,520	25%	5,552	25%
Golden Hill Road	South of Dallons Drive	5,730	32%	5,802	32%
Niblick Road	East of Spring Street	31,430	84%	31,462	84%
South River Road	North of Navajo Avenue	12,750	72%	12,782	72%
	North of Serenade	12,710	34%	12,742	34%
Union Road <sup>1</sup>	East of Golden Hill Road	8,640	40%	8,794	41%

Notes: ADT = average daily traffic; SR = State Route

1. Road segment is assumed to be affected by construction traffic for both Estrella Substation and 70 kV power line. All other road segments are assumed to be affected by construction traffic for the 70 kV power line only.

Sources: City of Paso Robles 2019; NEET West and PG&E 2017



As shown in Table 4.17-4, the Proposed Project's construction traffic would increase the capacity utilization of affected roadways by one percent or less. The highest rate of capacity utilization with the addition of the Proposed Project's construction vehicle trips would be 84 percent, which is the highest rate of capacity utilization for these roadways under existing conditions. With respect to US 101 and SR 46, recent data is not available for these roadways, but based on data from 2011 (included in the previous iteration of the City of Paso Robles General Plan *Circulation Element*), the Proposed Project's construction vehicle trips would not significantly affect these roadways in terms of capacity utilization. The capacity utilization for applicable segments of US 101 and SR 46 was 80 percent or below in 2011 (City of Paso Robles 2011).

Apart from addition of vehicle trips to area roadways, Proposed Project construction activities would (without implementation of preventative measures) adversely impact the circulation system through operation of heavy equipment and trucks on public roadways (thereby causing delays and potentially resulting in safety hazards), temporary lane or road closures that may be necessary during Proposed Project construction, and impacts from crossing structures needed for the 70 kV power line to span roadways. Construction truck traffic (e.g., crew trucks, semi-trucks, dump trucks, concrete trucks, and water trucks) accessing the Estrella Substation site and/or work area sites along the Proposed Project's 70 kV power line route may have adverse effects on traffic flow due to the slower travel speeds and larger turning radii of trucks. Movement of construction equipment within public roadways would similarly affect traffic, in particular along the new 70 kV power line segment and reconducted segment where it may be necessary to conduct work from road shoulders where poles are located adjacent to roadways.

Construction of the Estrella Substation is unlikely to require any lane or road closures. However, temporary lane or road closures may be required for construction of the 70 kV power line, in particular at locations where the power line route would cross roadways. The following roadways would be spanned by the new 70 kV power line segment: SR 46, Union Road, Buena Vista Drive, and a private dirt road that provides access to a residence in the northwestern project area. The reconductoring segment would span River Oaks Drive, SR 46, Union Road, Creston Road, and several local roadways. See crossing structure locations on Figure 4.17-1. The roadway crossings would utilize crossing structures (consisting of temporary wood poles) or line trucks or cranes and possibly netting to protect the existing roadways from sagging conductors during construction.

Temporary lane or road closures required for crossing structure installation would, absent proper protocols, result in substantial delays and potentially safety hazards for local motorists, pedestrians, and bicycles. These delays and safety hazards would conflict with the various applicable circulation elements, resulting in a significant impact. However, no bikeways would specifically be impacted, as none of the existing bikeways/bicycle facilities in the Paso Robles area are located within or directly adjacent to Proposed Project work areas.

While the Proposed Project Applicants would obtain encroachment permits from Caltrans, County of San Luis Obispo, and/or City of Paso Robles for impacts to jurisdictional rights-of-way, **Mitigation Measure TR-1** would be necessary to establish minimum traffic control standards and to ensure that all transportation modes are protected. Like the encroachment permits, Mitigation Measure TR-1 would include requirements to minimize inconvenience to the traveling public and ensure that all warning signs, lights, devices, and procedures conform to the

latest MUTCD. With implementation of Mitigation Measure TR-1 and the requirements in encroachment permits, Proposed Project construction would not result in substantial delays or pose a hazard to motorists.

Overall, while Proposed Project construction would add a minor number of vehicle trips to the area that would not substantially affect existing roadway capacity, the Proposed Project would conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, during construction by causing delays and safety hazards. This impact would be significant. However, with implementation of Mitigation Measure TR-1, this impact would be mitigated to a level that **less than significant with mitigation.**

#### **Mitigation Measure TR-1: Construction Traffic Control Plan**

HWT and PG&E shall each implement a traffic control plan during Proposed Project construction and/or during construction of the reasonably foreseeable distribution components or selected alternatives. The traffic control plan will minimize vehicle travel delays and potential roadway hazards on public roadways during construction activities. The traffic control plan may be used to satisfy requirements imposed in encroachment permits ~~issued by~~ ~~from~~ Caltrans, County of San Luis Obispo, and/or City of Paso Robles. The traffic control plan shall provide for the following:

- In situations where slow-moving trucks or construction equipment are operated on public roadways (e.g., accessing the Estrella Substation site or staging or work areas along the Proposed Project's 70 kV power line route), signage and/or flaggers shall be used to warn motorists of potential safety hazards associated with the slow-moving vehicles.
- For any lane closures, signage, flaggers, and/or other devices shall be used to route vehicle traffic around the construction work area. The traffic control measures shall ensure that pedestrians and bicyclists are provided safe passage around the work area, where applicable. The routing of traffic around the construction work area during temporary lane closures shall be adequate to provide for continuity of access for all vehicles lawfully using the applicable public roadways in compliance with the California Vehicle Code.
- For any road closures, detours shall be provided and signage, flaggers, and/or other devices shall be used to ensure motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists are able to safely pass through the detour areas. Detours during temporary road closures shall be adequate to provide for continuity of access for all vehicles lawfully using the applicable public roadways in compliance with the California Vehicle Code.
- Protocols from the applicable agencies to notify Ppolice, fire, and other emergency services departments serving the area ~~shall be notified~~ of planned lane or road closures on public roadways at least 48 hours in advance.
- Crossing structure installation shall occur during periods of low traffic (e.g., avoiding the morning and evening rush hour periods) to the extent practicable.

- All warning signs, lights, devices, and procedures used in the construction traffic control plan shall conform to the latest MUTCD.

### **Operation**

As described in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, the substation and 70 kV power line would be remotely operated and no staff would be located permanently on-site. As such, there would be no daily vehicle trips from Proposed Project personnel during the operation phase. The vehicle trips generated by the Proposed Project during operation would be limited to personnel conducting periodic inspections and as-needed maintenance/repair activities. The Estrella Substation would generally be inspected monthly (with more invasive inspections performed periodically), while the 70 kV power line would be inspected annually by PG&E routine patrols, either from the ground or by helicopter. A detailed inspection of the power lines is typically performed by staff every 2 years (for wood structures) or every 5 years (for lines constructed on steel structures). As such, the Proposed Project operational activities would add minimal, infrequent trips to area roadways that would not affect capacity or cause delays.

Proposed Project operation and maintenance activities would not be expected to require lane or road closures or operation of heavy equipment within public roadways; however, if these activities were to be required (e.g., due to a significant repair of a power line structure or conductor adjacent to a roadway), this could result in a significant impact for the reasons described above under “Construction.” To reduce this impact, the Applicants would be required to implement the measures in **Mitigation Measure TR-1**, as well as obtain any needed encroachment permits from the applicable jurisdictions/agencies. Given implementation of Mitigation Measure TR-1 and adherence to requirements in encroachment permits, this impact would be **less than significant with mitigation**.

### **Impact TR-2: Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, Subdivision (b) – Less than Significant**

As discussed in Section 4.17.3, above, Senate Bill 743, which was codified in PRC Section 21099, required changes to the criteria for determining the significance of transportation impacts included in the CEQA Guidelines in order to “promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses.” These changes have been incorporated into Section 15064.3 of the CEQA Guidelines, identifying VMT as the most appropriate metric to evaluate a project’s transportation impacts. Subdivision (b) of CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 discusses criteria for analyzing transportation impacts and consists of four subsections. The following paragraphs briefly describe the four subsections and their applicability to the Proposed Project:

- (1) Land Use Projects – CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b)(1) discusses conditions under which projects involving non-transportation land uses may have significant transportation impacts. Because the Proposed Project is not a transportation project, it is considered a land use project for the purpose of analyzing transportation impacts during the Proposed Project operations.
- (2) Transportation Projects – Section 15064.3(b)(2) discusses conditions under which transportation projects may have significant transportation impacts. This subsection does not apply to the Proposed Project.

- (3) Qualitative Analysis – Section 15064.3(b)(3) explains that, if no existing models or methods are available to estimate the VMT for a proposed project, the project’s VMT may be analyzed qualitatively, noting that a qualitative analysis of construction traffic may be appropriate for many projects. A qualitative analysis of the Proposed Project’s construction transportation impacts relative to CEQA Guidelines 15064.3 (b) was conducted.
- (4) Methodology – Section 15064.3(b)(4) states that a lead agency has discretion to choose the most appropriate methodology to evaluate a project’s VMT and should document and explain any assumptions used to estimate VMT. Screening criteria described in the Technical Advisory (OPR 2018) were applied to the Proposed Project to evaluate the need for further VMT analysis. As described below, the estimation of vehicle trips generated by Project operations falls below the screening threshold and therefore no further analysis was conducted.

As discussed in Impact TR-1 above, the Proposed Project would add a minor amount of vehicle trips to area roadways during construction, and even fewer trips during operation. Therefore, the project would not significantly affect existing roadway capacity. The VMT for Proposed Project construction-related vehicle trips would depend on several factors, including the origin of construction worker commute trips (e.g., distance from their homes or temporary lodging to the construction site), origin of materials and equipment deliveries to the construction site, and distance to landfills or other disposal sites from the construction site. While these factors are not all precisely known at this time, the relatively low overall number of vehicle trips generated during Proposed Project construction would equate to a relatively low total VMT. Additionally, the construction vehicle trips and associated VMT would be temporary, minimizing the potential long-term impact of the Proposed Project in terms of GHG emissions.

The Technical Advisory discussed in Section 4.17.3 includes guidance for identifying screening thresholds to evaluate when a project should be expected to result in a less-than-significant transportation impact relative to VMT, without performing a detailed study. This guidance notes that, unless there is substantial evidence to the contrary, projects that, based on land use type, would add 110 or fewer trips per day, could be considered not to lead to a significant impact. As described in the discussion under Impact TR-1, the Proposed Project operations would generate approximately one round-trip per month, which would be well below the suggested screening threshold. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, Subdivision (b) during operation. Overall, this impact would be **less than significant**.

**Impact TR-3: Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)**  
– *Less than Significant with Mitigation*

The Proposed Project would not require changes to any road configurations that could create sharp curves or dangerous intersections. For detailed discussion regarding potential safety hazards during construction, refer to the discussion under Impact TR-1, above. As described under Impact TR-1, the presence of slow-moving trucks and use of construction equipment on project area roadways would create a potential safety hazard to motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists from the incompatible uses. This impact would be significant. Implementation of

**Mitigation Measure TR-1** and adherence to requirements in encroachment permits from applicable jurisdictions/agencies would ensure that operation of heavy trucks and equipment in public roadways during Proposed Project construction would not pose a significant hazard.

The Proposed Project would include new vehicular access driveways to the Estrella Substation site that, if not properly designed and constructed, could result in safety hazards. However, the Proposed Project site plan would be designed such that all access roads, driveways, and parking areas are accessible to emergency service vehicles. Overall, this impact would be **less than significant with mitigation**.

**Impact TR-4: Result in inadequate emergency access or interfere with an adopted emergency evacuation plan – *Less than Significant with Mitigation***

During Proposed Project construction, emergency access on nearby local roads could be restricted by the presence of slow-moving trucks on local roads and/or work occurring within the public right of way, such as the construction of crossing structures at local roadways. Therefore, construction of the Proposed Project would result in a significant impact to emergency access. As discussed under Impact TR-1, implementation of **Mitigation Measure TR-1** and adherence to requirements in encroachment permits from applicable jurisdictions/agencies would mitigate Proposed Project construction activities impacts to less than significant levels. Emergency departments would be notified of planned lane or road closures under Mitigation Measure TR-1. Additionally, while the Proposed Project construction could result in temporary lane or road closures, the activities would be temporary and not dissimilar from other road projects that typically occur in the area.

As previously described under Impact TR-1, operational traffic would not substantially reduce the effectiveness of nearby roadways or impair emergency access on these roads. No aspects of the Proposed Project would permanently affect or alter existing public roadways. For these reasons, the Proposed Project would not be expected to result in inadequate emergency access or interfere with emergency evacuation. As such, this impact would be **less than significant with mitigation**.

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

The transportation impacts of the reasonably foreseeable distribution components would be similar but less severe than those described for the Proposed Project (see Impact TR-1). While the types of equipment and vehicles used for installation of the reasonably foreseeable distribution components would be similar to those used in Proposed Project construction, the estimated vehicle trips for the distribution work would be much fewer than for construction of the Proposed Project (NEET West and PG&E 2017). Reduced vehicle trips would occur because the construction schedule is shorter, and grading and site preparation at the 70 kV substation will have been completed. Reduced vehicle trips would also occur due to the fewer workers required and fewer material, water, and fuel deliveries (NEET West and PG&E 2017). The PEA estimated that during peak construction activities, the reasonably foreseeable distribution components would generate 31 daily round-trip vehicle trips (equivalent to 62 one-way trips) (NEET West and PG&E 2017). As discussed in Impact TR-1, this number of trips would not exceed the existing capacity utilization of any roadways in the area. Given that the reasonably

foreseeable distribution components would be operated remotely, they would generate a negligible number of trips over the long-term for inspections and/or maintenance.

The work within Estrella Substation for the reasonably foreseeable distribution components would have no potential to directly impact public roadways. Likewise, the southern reasonably foreseeable new distribution line segment would be installed largely along an existing private road within agricultural fields north of the Estrella Substation and would not impact the circulation system. However, the northern reasonably foreseeable new distribution line segment would be installed ~~within the~~ along one side of the SR 46 right-of-way and the additional 21/12 kV pad-mounted transformers would be installed along existing public roadways; thus, these activities would have potential to disrupt traffic and alternative transportation modes. Operation of heavy construction equipment within roadways and/or any temporary lane closures that may be necessary for construction of the reasonably foreseeable distribution components could cause delays or create a safety hazard, particularly if proper protocols are not followed. As such, this impact would be significant. The Proposed Project Applicants would need to obtain encroachment permits from Caltrans and County of San Luis Obispo for activities impacting public roadways. **Mitigation Measure TR-1** must be implemented to ensure traffic control measures are implemented and that all transportation modes are protected. With implementation of these measures, the reasonably foreseeable distribution components would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.

Ultimate substation buildout would involve activities primarily within the fence line of the already-constructed Estrella Substation (i.e., installation of additional transformers, breakers, and switches in the 230 kV and 70 kV substations) and thus would not substantially affect any public roadways or otherwise conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system. Although construction and operation of distribution feeders and/or 70 kV power lines that could be established through ultimate buildout of the Estrella Substation could have impacts on transportation, the routes of these future lines are not known and thus the impacts are speculative. Therefore, overall, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant with mitigation**.

Similar to the Proposed Project (see discussion under Impact TR-2), VMT associated with construction activities for the reasonably foreseeable distribution components and ultimate substation buildout would depend on a number of factors, such as the origin of construction worker commute trips (e.g., distance from their homes or temporary lodging to the construction site), origin of materials and equipment deliveries to the construction site, and distance to landfills or other disposal sites from the construction site. While these factors are not all precisely known at this time, the low overall number of vehicle trips generated during construction of distribution components and ultimate buildout of Estrella Substation would equate to a relatively low total VMT (which would be temporary). During operation, the reasonably foreseeable distribution components and the Estrella Substation at its ultimate buildout capacity would generate well below 110 trips per day (they would be operated remotely); thus, they would be considered to have a less than significant impact with respect to CEQA Guidelines 15064.3, subdivision (b) per OPR's (2018) Technical Advisory. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

Neither the reasonably foreseeable distribution components nor the facilities associated with ultimate substation buildout would permanently change any road configurations to create sharp curves or dangerous intersections. Construction of the reasonably foreseeable distribution components may require operation of heavy construction equipment and slow-moving trucks within public roadways, which could potentially increase hazards due to the incompatible uses and/or interfere with emergency vehicle access and movement and evacuation procedures, a significant impact. However, implementation of **Mitigation Measure TR-1** and adherence to requirements in any needed encroachment permits would reduce these effects to a level that is less than significant. Given the limited activities associated with ultimate substation buildout occurring within the existing Estrella Substation, these activities would not have the potential to substantially affect public roadways such as to result in substantial hazards or interfere with emergency access, and implementation of mitigation would not be required. Therefore, overall, impacts under significance criteria C and D would be **less than significant with mitigation**.

## ***Alternatives***

### **No Project Alternative**

Under the No Project Alternative, no transportation impacts would occur. No new substation or new and reconducted power line segments would be constructed; therefore, no vehicle trips would be generated during construction or operation and there would be no potential for impacts from construction activities affecting public roadways. As a result, **no impact** would occur under any of the significance criteria.

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

Construction of the substation at the Bonel Ranch Substation Site under Alternative SS-1 would have similar transportation impacts as the proposed Estrella Substation. The number of construction vehicle trips and the frequency of the trips for Alternative SS-1 is estimated to be the same as for the Proposed Project (see Table 4.17-3); however, the effects of construction-related transportation impacts would last longer due to the longer construction schedule for Alternative SS-1. In general, the Bonel Ranch Substation Site is in a similarly or more rural location as the proposed Estrella Substation site. The number of construction vehicle trips associated with construction of Alternative SS-1 would not substantially affect roadway capacity utilization of Estrella Road, SR 46, or other roadways in this area. The substation at the Alternative SS-1 site would be operated remotely and would generate no vehicle trips during operation apart from those associated with monthly inspections and as-needed maintenance and repairs.

Construction activities for Alternative SS-1 would have similar potential as the Proposed Project to directly impact roadways from operation of heavy equipment within the public right-of-way and from heavy trucks entering and exiting the construction site. Temporary lane or road closures are not anticipated to be necessary for construction of Alternative SS-1, but if needed, these actions could impact motorists, as well as bicyclists and pedestrians, particularly if proper protocols are not followed. This would result in a significant impact. For impacts to Estrella Road, the Proposed Project Applicants would need to obtain an encroachment permit from County of San Luis Obispo. Additionally, **Mitigation Measure TR-1** would be implemented to ensure that traffic control measures are incorporated and all transportation modes are protected. With implementation of these measures, Alternative SS-1 would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway,

bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, during construction. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant with mitigation**.

Similar to the proposed Estrella Substation (see discussion under Impact TR-2), VMT associated with construction activities for Alternative SS-1 would depend on a number of factors, such as the origin of construction worker commute trips (e.g., distance from their homes or temporary lodging to the construction site), origin of materials and equipment deliveries to the construction site, and distance to landfills or other disposal sites from the construction site. While these factors are not all precisely known at this time, the relatively low overall number of vehicle trips generated during construction of Alternative SS-1 would equate to a relatively low total VMT (which would be temporary). During operation, the substation under Alternative SS-1 would generate well below 110 trips per day (the substation would be operated remotely); thus, the alternative would be considered to have a less than significant impact with respect to CEQA Guidelines 15064.3, subdivision (b) per OPR's (2018) Technical Advisory. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

The substation under Alternative SS-1 would not permanently change any road configurations to create sharp curves or dangerous intersections. Construction of Alternative SS-1 may require operation of heavy construction equipment and slow-moving trucks within public roadways, which could potentially increase hazards due to the incompatible uses and/or interfere with emergency vehicle access and movement and evacuation procedures, resulting in a significant impact. Accordingly, **Mitigation Measure TR-1** and requirements in any needed encroachment permits would be implemented in order to reduce these effects to a level that is less than significant. Therefore, impacts under significance criteria C and D would be **less than significant with mitigation**.

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

Construction of the 70 kV power line under Alternative PLR-1A would have similar transportation impacts as the Proposed Project's 70 kV power line; however, due to the longer construction schedule (approximately 16 months longer) for Alternative PLR-1A, these effects would be experienced for a longer period of time. As shown in Table 3-5 in Chapter 3, *Alternatives Description*, construction of Alternative PLR-1A would generate the same number of daily construction worker and truck trips as the Proposed Project, but the number of days of construction would be greater. Given Alternative PLR-1A's route through rural, agricultural areas north of the Paso Robles Municipal Airport, the vehicle trips would primarily affect rural County roads (e.g., Jardine Road, Wellsona Road, River Road); however, construction workers and trucks accessing the site also would likely use regional access routes such as SR 46 and US 101. Due to the relatively low number of daily trips associated with the construction activities, this would not substantially affect existing roadway capacity utilization such as to cause significant adverse impacts. Once constructed, the power line under Alternative PLR-1A would be operated remotely and would generate minimal vehicle trips associated with periodic inspections and as-needed maintenance and repairs.

Construction activities for Alternative PLR-1A would have similar potential as the Proposed Project to directly impact roadways from operation of heavy equipment within the public right-of-way, from heavy trucks entering and exiting the construction site, and from temporary lane or road closures that would be required (5 to 10 minutes at a time) at locations where the 70 kV line would cross existing roadways. This would be a significant impact. For impacts to County



roadways, the Proposed Project Applicants would need to obtain an encroachment permit from County of San Luis Obispo. The Applicants also may need to obtain an encroachment permit from Caltrans for the portion of Alternative PLR-1A that would cross SR 46. The encroachment permits would include requirements for traffic control. However, **Mitigation Measure TR-1** would be implemented to ensure that traffic control measures are properly incorporated and all transportation modes are protected. With implementation of these measures, Alternative PLR-1A would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, during construction. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant with mitigation**.

Similar to the Proposed Project (see discussion under Impact TR-2), VMT associated with construction activities for Alternative PLR-1A would depend on a number of factors, such as the origin of construction worker commute trips (e.g., distance from their homes or temporary lodging to the construction site), origin of materials and equipment deliveries to the construction site, and distance to landfills or other disposal sites from the construction site. While these factors are not all precisely known at this time, the relatively low overall number of vehicle trips generated during construction of Alternative PLR-1A would equate to a relatively low total VMT (which would be temporary). During operation, the power line under Alternative PLR-1A would generate well below 110 trips per day (the power line would be operated remotely); thus, the alternative would be considered to have a less than significant impact with respect to CEQA Guidelines 15064.3, subdivision (b) per OPR's (2018) Technical Advisory. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

The power line under Alternative PLR-1A would not permanently change any road configurations to create sharp curves or dangerous intersections. Construction of Alternative PLR-1A may require operation of heavy construction equipment and slow-moving trucks within public roadways, which could potentially increase hazards due to the incompatible uses and/or interfere with emergency vehicle access and movement and evacuation procedures, a significant impact. However, with implementation of **Mitigation Measure TR-1** and adherence to requirements in encroachment permits, these effects would be reduced to a level that is less than significant. Therefore, impacts under significance criteria C and D would be **less than significant with mitigation**.

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

Construction of the 70 kV power line under Alternative PLR-1C would have similar transportation impacts as the Proposed Project's 70 kV power line; however, due to the longer construction schedule (approximately 15 months longer) for Alternative PLR-1C, these effects would be experienced for a longer period of time. As shown in Table 3-9 in Chapter 3, *Alternatives Description*, construction of Alternative PLR-1C would generate the same number of daily construction worker and truck trips as the Proposed Project, but the number of days of construction would be greater. Given Alternative PLR-1C's route through rural, agricultural areas north of the Paso Robles Municipal Airport, the vehicle trips would primarily affect rural County roads (e.g., Estrella Road, Jardine Road, Wellsona Road, River Road); however, construction workers and trucks accessing the site also would likely use regional access routes such as SR 46 and US 101. Due to the relatively low number of daily trips associated with the construction activities, this would not substantially affect existing roadway capacity utilization such as to cause significant adverse impacts. Once constructed, the power line under Alternative PLR-1C

would be operated remotely and would generate minimal vehicle trips associated with periodic inspections and as-needed maintenance and repairs.

Construction activities for Alternative PLR-1C would have similar potential as the Proposed Project to directly impact roadways from operation of heavy equipment within the public right-of-way, from heavy trucks entering and exiting the construction site, and from temporary lane or road closures that would be required (5 to 10 minutes at a time) at locations where the 70 kV line would cross existing roadways. This would be a significant impact. For impacts to County roadways, the Proposed Project Applicants would need to obtain an encroachment permit from County of San Luis Obispo, which would include requirements for traffic control. However, **Mitigation Measure TR-1** would be implemented to ensure that traffic control measures are properly incorporated and all transportation modes are protected. With implementation of these measures, Alternative PLR-1C would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, during construction. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant with mitigation**.

Similar to the Proposed Project (see discussion under Impact TR-2), VMT associated with construction activities for Alternative PLR-1C would depend on a number of factors, such as the origin of construction worker commute trips (e.g., distance from their homes or temporary lodging to the construction site), origin of materials and equipment deliveries to the construction site, and distance to landfills or other disposal sites from the construction site. While these factors are not all precisely known at this time, the relatively low overall number of vehicle trips generated during construction of Alternative PLR-1C would equate to a relatively low total VMT (which would be temporary). During operation, the power line under Alternative PLR-1C would generate well below 110 trips per day (the power line would be operated remotely); thus, the alternative would be considered to have a less than significant impact with respect to CEQA Guidelines 15064.3, subdivision (b) per OPR's (2018) Technical Advisory. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

The power line under Alternative PLR-1C would not permanently change any road configurations to create sharp curves or dangerous intersections. Construction of Alternative PLR-1C may require operation of heavy construction equipment and slow-moving trucks within public roadways, which could potentially increase hazards due to the incompatible uses and/or interfere with emergency vehicle access and movement and evacuation procedures, a significant impact. However, with implementation of **Mitigation Measure TR-1** and adherence to requirements in encroachment permits, these effects would be reduced to a level that is less than significant. Therefore, impacts under significance criteria C and D would be **less than significant with mitigation**.

### **Alternative PLR-3: Strategic Undergrounding (Options 1 & 2)**

Construction of the underground 70 kV power line segment under Alternative PLR-3 (both options) would have more severe transportation impacts compared to the Proposed Project's overhead 70 kV power line due to the prolonged lane closures required for trenching to install the underground line. As shown in Table 3-12 in Chapter 3, *Alternatives Description*, construction of Alternative PLR-3 would generate similar numbers of daily worker and truck trips as the Proposed Project's 70 kV power line. However, construction of Alternative PLR-3 would require single lane closures for approximately 4 to 6 weeks on Germaine Way; 11 to 13 weeks

on Wisteria Lane (Option 1 only); 7 to 9 weeks on Golden Hill Road; 3 to 5 weeks on the Cava Robles RV Resort driveway, and 4 to 6 weeks on the Circle B Homeowners Association road. While the construction worker and truck trips would not be sufficient to exceed the utilization capacity of any local roadways (e.g., Golden Hill Road, SR 46, US 101), the lane closures could cause delays and potentially create safety hazards for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians, particularly if proper protocols are not implemented. This would be a significant impact. For the lane closures and any construction activities within the public right-of-way, the Proposed Project Applicants would need to obtain encroachment permits from the County of San Luis Obispo and City of Paso Robles, which would include requirements for traffic control. Further, **Mitigation Measure TR-1** would be implemented to ensure that traffic control measures are properly incorporated and all transportation modes are protected. With implementation of these measures, Alternative PLR-3 would not substantially conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, during construction. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant with mitigation**.

Similar to the Proposed Project (see discussion under Impact TR-2), VMT associated with construction activities for Alternative PLR-3 would depend on a number of factors, such as the origin of construction worker commute trips (e.g., distance from their homes or temporary lodging to the construction site), origin of materials and equipment deliveries to the construction site, and distance to landfills or other disposal sites from the construction site. While these factors are not all precisely known at this time, the relatively low overall number of vehicle trips generated during construction of Alternative PLR-3 would equate to a relatively low total VMT (which would be temporary). During operation, Alternative PLR-3 would generate well below 110 trips per day (the power line segment would be operated remotely); thus, the alternative would be considered to have a less than significant impact with respect to CEQA Guidelines 15064.3, subdivision (b) per OPR's (2018) Technical Advisory. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

The power line segment under Alternative PLR-3 would not permanently change any road configurations to create sharp curves or dangerous intersections. Once constructed, the power line segment would be entirely underground (except for the transition stations, which would be located off the roadway) and road surfaces would be restored to existing conditions. As noted above, construction of Alternative PLR-3 would require extended single lane closures along several local roads and also may require operation of heavy construction equipment and slow-moving trucks within public roadways. This could potentially increase hazards due to the incompatible uses and/or interfere with emergency vehicle access and movement and evacuation procedures, a significant impact. However, with implementation of **Mitigation Measure TR-1** and adherence to requirements in encroachment permits, these effects would be reduced to a level that is less than significant. Therefore, impacts under significance criteria C and D would be **less than significant with mitigation**.

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

Construction of the substation at the Templeton Substation Expansion Site under Alternative SE-1A would have similar transportation impacts as the proposed Estrella Substation. The number of construction vehicle trips and the frequency of the trips for Alternative SE-1A is estimated to be the same as for the Proposed Project (see Table 4.17-3); however, the effects of construction-related transportation impacts would last longer due to the longer construction

schedule for Alternative SE-1A. In general, the Templeton Substation Expansion Site is in a similarly or more rural location as the proposed Estrella Substation site. The number of construction vehicle trips associated with construction of Alternative SE-1A would not substantially affect roadway capacity utilization of El Pomar Drive, South River Road, US 101, or other roadways in this area. The substation at the Alternative SE-1A site would be operated remotely and would generate no vehicle trips during operation apart from those associated with monthly inspections and as-needed maintenance and repairs.

Construction activities for Alternative SE-1A would have similar potential as the Proposed Project to directly impact roadways from operation of heavy equipment within the public right-of-way and from heavy trucks entering and exiting the construction site. Temporary lane or road closures are not anticipated to be necessary for construction of Alternative SE-1A, but if needed, these actions could impact motorists, as well as bicyclists and pedestrians, particularly if proper protocols are not followed. This would be a significant impact. For impacts to El Pomar Drive, the Proposed Project Applicants would need to obtain an encroachment permit from County of San Luis Obispo. Further, **Mitigation Measure TR-1** would be implemented to ensure that traffic control measures are incorporated and all transportation modes are protected. With implementation of these measures, Alternative SE-1A would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, during construction. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant with mitigation**.

Similar to the proposed Estrella Substation (see discussion under Impact TR-2), VMT associated with construction activities for Alternative SE-1A would depend on a number of factors, such as the origin of construction worker commute trips (e.g., distance from their homes or temporary lodging to the construction site), origin of materials and equipment deliveries to the construction site, and distance to landfills or other disposal sites from the construction site. While these factors are not all precisely known at this time, the relatively low overall number of vehicle trips generated during construction of Alternative SE-1A would equate to a relatively low total VMT (which would be temporary). During operation, the substation under Alternative SE-1A would generate well below 110 trips per day (the substation would be operated remotely); thus, the alternative would be considered to have a less than significant impact with respect to CEQA Guidelines 15064.3, subdivision (b) per OPR's (2018) Technical Advisory. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

The substation under Alternative SE-1A would not permanently change any road configurations to create sharp curves or dangerous intersections. Construction of Alternative SE-1A may require operation of heavy construction equipment and slow-moving trucks within public roadways, which could potentially increase hazards due to the incompatible uses and/or interfere with emergency vehicle access and movement and evacuation procedures, a significant impact. However, with implementation of **Mitigation Measure TR-1** and adherence to requirements in any needed encroachment permits, these effects would be reduced to a level that is less than significant. Therefore, impacts under significance criteria C and D would be **less than significant with mitigation**.

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

Construction of the 70 kV power line under Alternative SE-PLR-2 would have similar transportation impacts as the Proposed Project's 70 kV power line; however, due to the shorter

construction schedule (approximately 9 months shorter) for Alternative SE-PLR-2, these effects would be experienced for a shorter period of time. As shown in Table 3-16 in Chapter 3, *Alternatives Description*, construction of Alternative SE-PLR-2 would generate the same number of daily construction worker and truck trips as the Proposed Project, but the number of days of construction would be fewer (except for site preparation and mobilization). Given Alternative SE-PLR-2's route through primarily rural residential areas of San Luis Obispo County, the vehicle trips would primarily affect rural County roads (e.g., El Pomar Road, South River Road); however, construction workers and trucks accessing the site also would likely use regional access routes such as SR 46 and US 101. The northern portion of the Alternative SE-PLR-2 route also passes through urban areas of Paso Robles along South River Road. Nevertheless, due to the relatively low number of daily trips associated with the construction activities, this would not substantially affect existing roadway capacity utilization such as to cause significant adverse impacts. Once constructed, the power line under Alternative SE-PLR-2 would be operated remotely and would generate minimal vehicle trips associated with periodic inspections and as-needed maintenance and repairs.

Construction activities for Alternative SE-PLR-2 would have similar potential as the Proposed Project to directly impact roadways from operation of heavy equipment within the public right-of-way, from heavy trucks entering and exiting the construction site, and from temporary lane or road closures that would be required (5 to 10 minutes at a time) at locations where the 70 kV line would cross existing roadways. This would be a significant impact. For impacts to County and City roadways, the Proposed Project Applicants would need to obtain encroachment permits from the County of San Luis Obispo and City of Paso Robles, which would include requirements for traffic control. Further, **Mitigation Measure TR-1** would be implemented to ensure that traffic control measures are properly incorporated and all transportation modes are protected. With implementation of these measures, Alternative SE-PLR-2 would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, during construction. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion A would be **less than significant with mitigation**.

Similar to the Proposed Project (see discussion under Impact TR-2), VMT associated with construction activities for Alternative SE-PLR-2 would depend on a number of factors, such as the origin of construction worker commute trips (e.g., distance from their homes or temporary lodging to the construction site), origin of materials and equipment deliveries to the construction site, and distance to landfills or other disposal sites from the construction site. While these factors are not all precisely known at this time, the relatively low overall number of vehicle trips generated during construction of Alternative SE-PLR-2 would equate to a relatively low total VMT (which would be temporary). During operation, the power line under Alternative SE-PLR-2 would generate well below 110 trips per day (the power line would be operated remotely); thus, the alternative would be considered to have a less than significant impact with respect to CEQA Guidelines 15064.3, subdivision (b) per OPR's (2018) Technical Advisory. Therefore, impacts under significance criterion B would be **less than significant**.

The power line under Alternative SE-PLR-2 would not permanently change any road configurations to create sharp curves or dangerous intersections. Construction of Alternative SE-PLR-2 may require operation of heavy construction equipment and slow-moving trucks within public roadways, which could potentially increase hazards due to the incompatible uses and/or interfere with emergency vehicle access and movement and evacuation procedures, a

significant impact. However, with implementation of **Mitigation Measure TR-1** and adherence to requirements in encroachment permits, these effects would be reduced to a level that is less than significant. Therefore, impacts under significance criteria C and D would be **less than significant with mitigation**.

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

Construction of FTM BESSs under Alternative BS-2 at the example sites considered in this EIR would generate vehicle traffic for activities such as vegetation removal, grading, concrete slab or foundation construction, delivery and installation of BESSs, construction/installation of appurtenant facilities, and establishing connections. Although the size of individual FTM BESSs would be determined based on future load conditions in the Paso Robles area, it is anticipated that these individual facilities would each be substantially smaller than the Estrella Substation (although a 50 megawatt / 400 megawatt-hour facility at the Templeton Substation site [example FTM Site 6] would occupy roughly 9.1 acres). In general, the numbers of daily worker and truck trips generated from construction of FTM BESSs under Alternative BS-2 would not be anticipated to exceed existing roadway capacity utilization. Once the FTM storage facilities are installed, operation and maintenance activities may involve minor adjustments and servicing from time to time, which would typically involve one or two workers traveling to the site and conducting maintenance or repairs.

Construction activities for Alternative BS-2 would have potential to directly impact roadways from operation of heavy equipment within the public right-of-way and from heavy trucks entering and exiting the construction site. Construction of FTM BESSs could impact motorists, as well as bicyclists and pedestrians. It is assumed that encroachment permits would be obtained for any construction activities under Alternative BS-2 that may substantially impact the roadway.

Similar to the proposed Estrella Substation (see discussion under Impact TR-2), VMT associated with construction activities for Alternative BS-2 would depend on a number of factors, such as the origin of construction worker commute trips (e.g., distance from their homes or temporary lodging to the construction site), origin of materials and equipment deliveries to the construction site, and distance to landfills or other disposal sites from the construction site. While these factors are not all precisely known at this time, the relatively low overall number of vehicle trips likely to be generated during construction of Alternative BS-2 would equate to a relatively low total VMT (which would be temporary). During operation, the FTM BESSs under Alternative BS-2 would generate well below 110 trips per day (the BESSs would be operated remotely).

The example FTM BESSs examined under Alternative BS-2 would not permanently change any road configurations to create sharp curves or dangerous intersections. Construction of Alternative BS-2 may require operation of heavy construction equipment and slow-moving trucks within public roadways, which could potentially increase hazards due to the incompatible uses and/or interfere with emergency vehicle access and movement and evacuation procedures. However, as mentioned above, it is assumed that encroachment permits would be obtained for any construction activities under Alternative BS-2 that may substantially impact the roadway.

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**

The specific locations of development sites under Alternative BS-3 are unknown. As described in Chapter 3, *Alternatives Description*, individual BTM solar and storage facilities would likely be installed on or within existing buildings. During construction, vehicle trips would be required for deliveries of individual BTM solar and/or storage units to customers' properties, installation of the units on-site, and wiring work to connect the BTM resources to existing electrical systems. Some building owners may choose to install the BTM facilities on previously undeveloped portions of their property, which would require vehicle trips for activities such as vegetation clearing, light grading, minor excavation, and installation of a concrete slab or a small enclosed building with a foundation. Once the BTM facilities are installed, operation and maintenance activities may involve minor adjustments and servicing from time to time, which would typically involve one or two workers traveling to the site and conducting maintenance/repairs.

Given the small-scale and dispersed nature of the BTM facilities under Alternative BS-3, construction and operation of these resources would not result in substantial conflicts with existing programs, plans, or policies related to the circulation system; substantial conflicts with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b); increased hazards due to design features or incompatible uses, or interference with emergency access or evacuation procedures.

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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