

## Chapter 6

# Other Statutory Considerations and Cumulative Impacts

## 6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents discussions of significant and unavoidable impacts, growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative impacts as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. The other statutory conditions are discussed for the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives, as appropriate.

## 6.2 Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines requires an environmental impact report (EIR) to describe any significant impacts that cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. All of the impacts associated with the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through the implementation of identified mitigation measures, with the exception of the impacts discussed below. The following impacts have been identified as significant and unavoidable:

- Impact AES-1 (Significance Criterion A): Have a substantial effect on a scenic vista (*Alternative SE-PLR-2*)
- Impact AES-3 (Significance Criterion C): In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings (public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality? (*Proposed Project; Alternative SE-PLR-2*)
- Impact AGR-1 (Significance Criterion A): Conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use. (*Proposed Project; Alternatives PLR-1A, PLR-1C, and SE-PLR-2*)
- Impact AGR-2 (Significance Criterion B): Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract. (*Proposed Project; Alternative SS-1*)
- Impact AQ-2 (Significance Criterion B): Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard. (*Proposed Project; Alternatives SS-1, PLR-1A, PLR-1C, PLR-3, SE-1A, and SE-PLR-2*)

- Impact AQ-3 (Significance Criterion C): Potential to expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. (Proposed Project; Alternatives SS-1, PLR-1A, PLR-1C, PLR-3, SE-1A, and SE-PLR-2)
- Impact HAZ-6 (Significance Criterion F): Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. (*No Project Alternative*)
- Impact NOISE-1 (Significance Criterion A): Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in a local general plan or noise ordinance or in the applicable standards of other agencies. (*Proposed Project; Alternatives SS-1, PLR-1A, PLR-1C, PLR-3, and SE-PLR-2*)
- Impact WF-1 (Significance Criterion A): Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. (*No Project Alternative*)

### 6.3 Significant Irreversible Changes

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR identify significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by the Proposed Project. These changes may include, for example, uses of non-renewable resources or provision of access to previously inaccessible areas, as well as project accidents that could result in permanent, long-term changes. Development of the Proposed Project or alternatives would require a permanent commitment of natural resources resulting from the direct consumption of fossil fuels and construction materials, the manufacture of new equipment that largely cannot be recycled at the end of the Proposed Project's or alternatives' useful lifetime, and energy required for the production of materials. Furthermore, construction of the Proposed Project could also result in loss of blue oak woodland habitat, as a result of pole and tower installation, vegetation removal, and clearing activities; this habitat can support special-status species. However, as evaluated in Section 4.4, "Biological Resources," while the Proposed Project would impact biological resources, with implementation of mitigation and applicant proposed measures (APMs), impacts to biological resources would be less than significant.

Additionally, as described in Section 4.2, "Agricultural Resources," the Proposed Project and/or several of the alternatives (PLR-1A, PLR-1C, and SE-PLR-2) would involve losses of Important Farmland. Despite application of compensatory mitigation mechanisms (i.e., conservation easements) via Mitigation Measure AG-1, these losses of Farmland would be permanent and irreversible.

Operation of the approved project (either the Proposed Project and/or alternative project components) would allow for the transport of additional electrical power generated from renewable and non-renewable resources, although the approved project itself would not require the future use of specific amounts of non-renewable resources beyond fuel and equipment needed for routine operation and maintenance activities. While the approved project would facilitate the delivery of electrical power generated from non-renewable resources (e.g., natural gas), these resources would be exploited and expended now and in the near future regardless of the approved project, as the production and use of the carbon-based

products that would become electricity transported by the approved project has been, or will be, approved by permitting agencies. Therefore, the primary and secondary impacts resulting from the Proposed Project or alternative(s) would be less than significant.

Accidents, such as the release of hazardous materials, could trigger irreversible environmental damage. As discussed in Section 4.9, “Hazards and Hazardous Materials,” construction of the Proposed Project or an alternative would involve limited quantities of miscellaneous hazardous substances, such as gasoline, diesel fuel, hydraulic fluid, solvents, and oils, in order to fuel and maintain vehicles and other motorized equipment. An accidental spill of any of these substances could impact water and/or groundwater quality; if a spill of significant quantity were to occur, the release could pose a hazard to construction workers and the public, as well as the environment. Considering the types and relatively minimal quantities of hazardous materials that would be used for the Proposed Project or alternative and the emergency response plans and other procedures that would be required by the APMs and existing regulations, accidental release is unlikely. State and federal regulations and safety requirements, as described in the regulatory setting in Section 4.9, would ensure that public health and safety risks would be maintained at acceptable levels, so that significant irreversible changes from accidental releases are not expected.

## 6.4 Growth Inducement

Section 15126.2(e) of the CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to include a detailed statement of a proposed project’s anticipated growth-inducing impacts. The analysis of growth-inducing impacts must discuss the ways in which a proposed project could foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing in the surrounding environment. The analysis must also address project-related actions that would remove existing obstacles to population growth, tax existing community service facilities and require construction of new facilities that cause significant environmental effects, or encourage or facilitate other activities that could, individually or cumulatively, significantly affect the environment. A project would be considered growth-inducing if it induces growth directly (through the construction of new housing or increasing population) or indirectly (such as increasing employment opportunities that would increase the population of the area or eliminating existing constraints on development that would encourage construction). Under CEQA, growth is not assumed to be beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

As described in Section 4.14, “Population and Housing,” the Proposed Project would not include any new homes or businesses; therefore, it would not directly induce substantial population growth. The Proposed Project, on its own, would not extend electrical distribution service to new areas such that it would indirectly induce population growth. However, the Proposed Project, with buildout of the reasonably foreseeable distribution components, would expand electric distribution service capacity to accommodate future anticipated growth in the Paso Robles Distribution Planning Area (DPA). Following completion of the Proposed Project, PG&E would be able to provide electricity more effectively to new applications (e.g., new homes and businesses).

Without the Proposed Project, it is conceivable that PG&E would not be able to accommodate the level of growth that is anticipated in the DPA. As described in Chapter 2, *Project Description* and in the Proponent’s Environmental Assessment (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 2014; U.S. Census Bureau 2014). As such, 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. The Proposed Project would accommodate the already anticipated growth.

Likewise, the alternatives under consideration would function similarly to the Proposed Project and would not directly result in new growth. Alternatives SS-1, PLR-1A, PLR-1C, SE-1A, and SE-PLR-2 would primarily solve the Transmission Objective of the Proposed Project and would not, on their own, increase electric distribution service capacity. While new distribution feeders could be built out from the substations sited at Bonel Ranch (Alternative SS-1) and Templeton Substation (Alternative SE-1A), this would occur in response to future forecasted growth, as described above for the Proposed Project. The power line routing alternatives (PLR-1A, PLR-1C, and SE-PLR-2) would merely connect new substations to the existing Paso Robles Substation, and would not affect distribution service capacity. Alternative PLR-3 would underground a portion of the Proposed Project's 70 kV overhead power line route and would not change the overall function of the Proposed Project. Finally, Alternatives BS-2 and BS-3 would address the Distribution Objective and would effectively expand electric distribution service capacity; however, these alternatives would be deployed to accommodate the same future growth as the Proposed Project and reasonably foreseeable distribution components and would not be growth-inducing for the reasons described above.

## 6.5 Cumulative Impacts

A cumulative impact refers to the combined effect of “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Cumulative impacts reflect “the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355[b]).

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 (a) requires that an EIR address the cumulative impacts of a proposed project when:

- the combined impact of the project and other projects are significant; and
- the project's incremental effects are expected to be cumulatively considerable, or significant, when viewed in combination with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects.

An EIR does not need to discuss cumulative impacts that do not result in part from the project evaluated in the EIR.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 requires an analysis of cumulative impacts to contain the following elements:

- Either (a) a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, or (b) a summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional or statewide plan, or related planning document, that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect.
- A definition of the geographic scope of the area affected by the cumulative effect, and a reasonable explanation for the geographic limitation used.
- A summary of the environmental effects expected to result from those projects with specific reference to additional information stating where that information is available.
- A reasonable analysis of the combined (cumulative) impacts of the relevant projects.

It must also evaluate a proposed project's potential to contribute to the significant cumulative impacts identified, and discuss feasible options for mitigating or avoiding the project's contributions to any significant cumulative effects.

The discussion of cumulative impacts is not required to provide as much detail as the discussion of the effects attributable to the project alone. Rather, the level of detail should be guided by what is practical and reasonable.

### 6.5.1 Methods Used in this Analysis

As mentioned above, Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines provides two recommended approaches for analyzing and preparing an adequate discussion of significant cumulative impacts. The approaches as defined in Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines are either:

- the *list approach*, which involves listing past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including those projects outside the control of the lead agency; or
- the *projection approach*, which utilizes a summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan; a related planning document; or an adopted environmental document for such a plan that evaluated regional or area-wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact.

This discussion utilizes the list approach for the cumulative impact analysis. The level of detail of a cumulative impact analysis should include a proposed project's geographic scope and other factors (e.g., a project's construction or operation activities, the nature of the environmental resource being examined, etc.) to ensure that the level of detail is practical and reasonable. The discussion focuses on the environmental resources that could be expected to be cumulatively affected by the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives in conjunction with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

**Table 6-1** defines the geographic scope that will be used in the impact analysis for each of the resource areas in which the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and/or alternatives could contribute to cumulative impacts.

**Table 6-1. Geographic Scope for Resources with Cumulative Impacts Relevant to the Proposed Project, Reasonably Foreseeable Distribution Components, and Alternatives**

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Geographic Scope<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Explanation for the Geographic Scope</b>
Aesthetics	Activity Area	This area covers the viewsheds and local visual character that would be affected by the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives.
Agriculture and Forestry Resources	Activity Area	This area covers areas that may be disturbed during construction activities and where agricultural land could be converted to non-agricultural uses from the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives.
Air Quality <sup>2</sup>	Regional	This area covers the South Central Coast Air Basin where construction and operation (and associated air pollutant emissions) of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would occur.
Biological Resources	Greater Paso Robles Area	This includes greater Paso Robles area, as well as the localized areas that may be disturbed during construction activities and operation of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives, as well as migratory nesting sites in the surrounding area.
Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions <sup>2</sup>	Global	GHG emissions at any location affect the global climate.

**Note:**

1. “Activity area” includes the immediate areas in which physical actions that are part of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would take place.
2. Cumulative impacts related to air quality and GHG emissions are evaluated in the respective sections (4.3 and 4.8) and are not discussed in this chapter.

## 6.5.2 Cumulative Impact Analysis

### Cumulative Setting

The effects of past and present actions have strongly influenced existing conditions. The following are the most important of these past and present actions:

- Population growth and associated development;
- Conversion of natural vegetation to developed land uses; and
- Introduction of nonnative plant and animal species.

In general, past activities are part of the existing conditions or environmental setting described for each resource topic. **Table 6-2** lists present and probable future activities that could cumulatively affect the environment and identifies the cumulative resource topics they affect along with the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives. Present and probable future activities were determined through internet searches of local planning agency websites and other publicly available databases, communications with City and County planning staff, and as disclosed through the public comment solicitation process. **Figure 6-1** shows the locations of these cumulative projects in relation to the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives. The project numbers listed in Table 6-2 correspond to the numbered locations in Figure 6-1.

*This page intentionally left blank.*



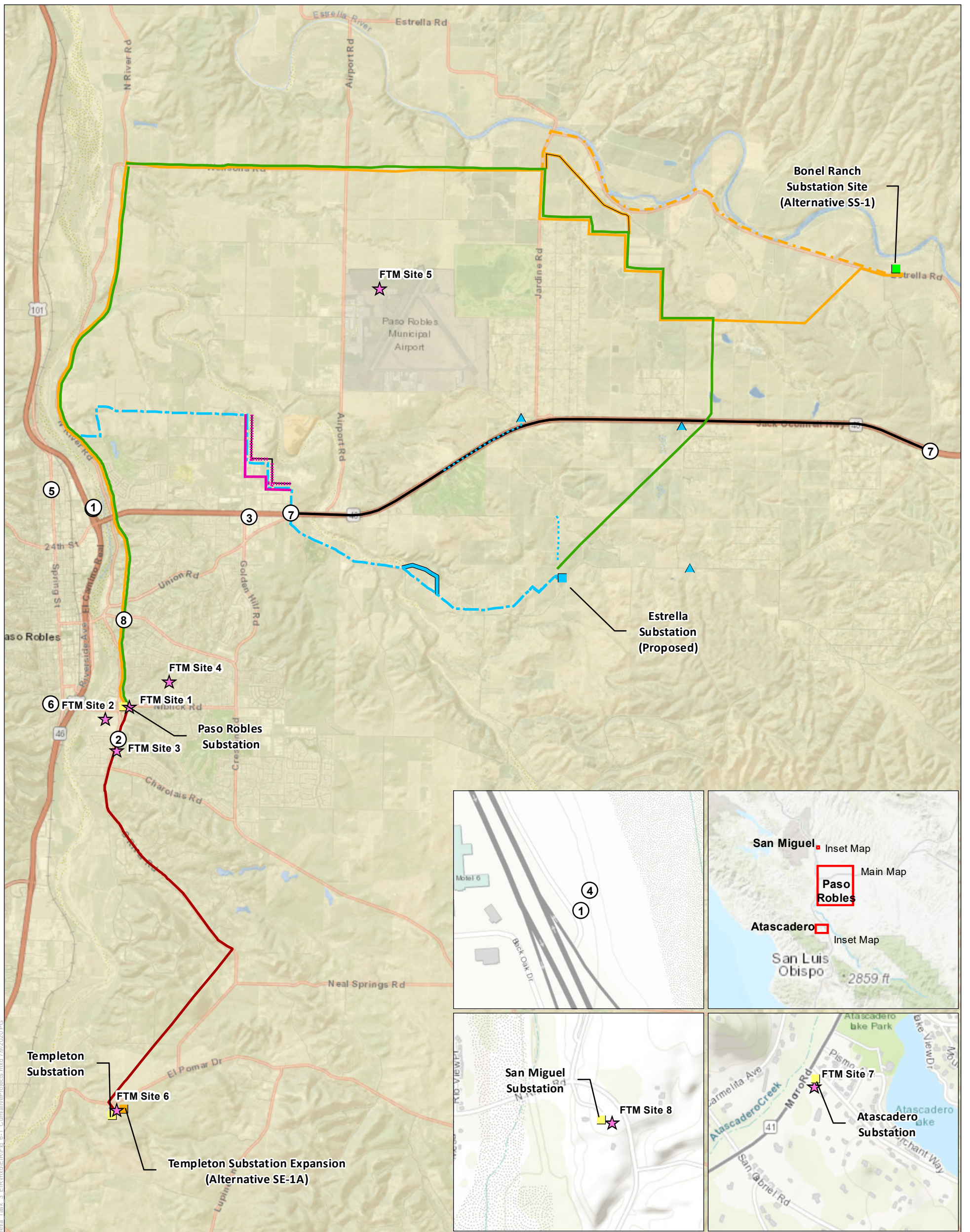
**Table 6-2. List of Reasonably Foreseeable Future Projects and Activities that May Cumulatively Affect Resources of Concern**

Project		Summary of Future Project Activity	Implementation Status / Schedule	Distance to Proposed Project Component and/or Alternative	Resource Topics Cumulatively Affected
No. <sup>1</sup>	Title				
1	Paso Robles Wastewater Treatment Facility – Distribution System Facilities	New distribution pipelines that will deliver recycled water from the city’s new tertiary treatment facility (completed in 2019) to east Paso Robles to irrigate golf courses, parks, and vineyards.	Construction anticipated to begin in 2020.	400 feet west of reconductoring segments for Proposed Project and Alternatives PLR-1A, PLR-1C	Air Quality, Biological Resources, GHG Emissions
2	Assisted Living Facility – The Oaks at Paso Robles	Assisted living facility on 2.8 acres (68,000 sq. ft.): 73 rooms, 24 memory care units, and 39 parking spaces.	Under construction in 2020.	0.3-mile south of reconductoring segments for Proposed Project and Alternatives PLR-1A, PLR-1C; adjacent to Alternative SE-PLR-2	Air Quality, GHG Emissions
3	Hilton Garden Inn	New 3-story hotel in two phases on 3.43 acres. Hotel includes 166 guest rooms and 176 parking spaces.	Under construction in 2020.	0.4-mile west of the Proposed Project’s new 70 kV power line segment	Air Quality, GHG Emissions
4	First Step Homeless Services Center	Facility to provide living space and services to homeless individuals: 36 beds, 6,000 square feet, dining room, kitchen, gathering area, staff offices.	Construction began May 2020; anticipated opening June 2021.	400 feet west of the reconductoring segments for the Proposed Project and Alternatives PLR-1A, PLR-1C	Air Quality, GHG Emissions
5	Paso Robles Youth Arts Foundation Center Expansion	7,000-sq. ft. expansion of performance/classroom space	Existing demolition began in spring 2020; construction	0.5-mile west of the reconductoring segments for the Proposed Project and Alternatives PLR-1A, PLR-1C	Air Quality, GHG Emissions

Project		Summary of Future Project Activity	Implementation Status / Schedule	Distance to Proposed Project Component and/or Alternative	Resource Topics Cumulatively Affected
No. <sup>1</sup>	Title				
			anticipated in 2023		
6	Paso Robles Gateway Project	170 acres, 325 hotel rooms, 17 workforce residential units, 80 resort residential units, 30,000-sq. ft. conference center	City Council approved initial plans in June 2020.	0.8-mile west of the reconductoring segments for the Proposed Project and Alternatives PLR-1A, PLR-1C; same distance west of Alternative SE-PLR-2	Aesthetics, Agricultural and Forestry, Air Quality, Biological Resources, GHG Emissions
7	Highway 46 East / Union Road Interchange Improvement (Caltrans)	2.5 miles of road improvements on Highway 46 East	Caltrans-funded and -approved for construction to commence in 2022/23.	Proposed Project’s new 70 kV power line segment would cross the interchange north-south; northern reasonably foreseeable distribution line segment overlaps improvements	Air Quality, GHG Emissions
8	Creston Road Duplexes	20 residential duplexes	Approved January 2020; construction expected to begin 2021.	230 feet west of the reconductoring segments for the Proposed Project and Alternatives PLR-1A, PLR-1C	Air Quality, GHG Emissions

**Notes:**

1. Project numbers correlate with numbering in Figure 6-1.



**Proposed Project**

- Estrella Substation
- 70kV Route
- New Distribution Line Segments
- 70 kV Minor Route Variation 1
- ▲ Additional 21/12 kV Pad-Mounted Transformer

**Existing Infrastructure**

- Existing Substations

**Project Alternatives**

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

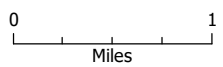
- Cumulative Projects\*
- Project No. 7\*\*

\*Names of cumulative projects can be found in Table 6-1  
 \*\*Extent of Project No. 7 along Hwy 46

**Figure 6-1**  
 Cumulative Projects

Source: ESRI 2020, 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



T:\PROJECTS\17010\_CPLUC\_Estrella\_Task\_3\_EIR\mxd\ER\Fig\_6-1\_CumulativeProjects.mxd 7/9/2020 10:43

*This page intentionally left blank.*

### 6.5.3 Cumulative Impacts

The potential for the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and/or alternatives to contribute to a cumulatively significant impact is evaluated for all resource topics (with the exception of air quality and GHG emissions; see note below), as described in **Table 6-3**. If the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and/or alternatives would contribute to a cumulatively significant impact, that impact is evaluated further in the discussion that follows Table 6-3.

GHG emissions are a cumulative issue and are already addressed in Section 4.8, “Greenhouse Gas Emissions”; therefore, this topic is not discussed further in this section. Similarly, cumulative effects on air quality are addressed in Section 4.3, “Air Quality,” and therefore are not discussed further in this section.

**Table 6-3. Summary of Cumulatively Significant Impacts and the Contribution of the Proposed Project, Reasonably Foreseeable Distribution Components, and Alternatives**

Resource Topic	Impact from Past, Present, and Probable Future Projects	Contribution of the Proposed Project, Reasonably Foreseeable Distribution Components, and Alternatives
Aesthetics	Other projects in the activity area could contribute to aesthetic impacts and collectively affect the region’s visual character, potentially leading to a cumulatively significant impact.	The Proposed Project would have a significant and unavoidable impact on existing visual character in some areas. Alternative SE-PLR-2 also would have a significant and unavoidable impact. Other alternatives, as well as the reasonably foreseeable distribution components, would have adverse aesthetic effects (related to the addition of utility infrastructure), although these effects would be less than significant <u>or less than significant with mitigation</u> on their own. Impacts to visual character from the Proposed Project, Alternative SE-PLR-2, other alternatives, and/or the reasonably foreseeable distribution components have potential to combine with similar impacts from past, present, and probably future projects and result in a cumulative impact. This cumulative impact is analyzed further below.
Agriculture and Forestry Resources	Nearby cumulative projects could affect agriculture or forestry resources, potentially leading to a cumulatively significant impact.	The Proposed Project and Alternatives <u>SS-1</u> , PLR-1A, PLR-1C, and SE-PLR-2 would have significant and unavoidable impacts on agriculture and forestry resources (i.e., conversion of Important Farmland to non-agricultural uses, and in the case of the Proposed Project <u>and Alternative SS-1</u> , conflict(s) with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract) in some areas. Other alternatives would have adverse effects

Resource Topic	Impact from Past, Present, and Probable Future Projects	Contribution of the Proposed Project, Reasonably Foreseeable Distribution Components, and Alternatives
		on agriculture and forestry resources, but these effects would not be considered significant on their own. Impacts on agriculture and forestry resources from the Proposed Project, Alternatives PLR-1A, PLR-1C, and SE-PLR-2, and other alternatives have potential to combine with similar impacts from past, present, and probably future projects and result in a cumulative impact. This cumulative impact is analyzed further below.
Biological Resources	Cumulative projects in the area would have the potential to affect special-status species, riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities, wetlands and other waters of the U.S., and wildlife movement, potentially leading to a cumulatively significant impact.	Construction and operation of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would have the potential to impact biological resources in some areas; however, these impacts would be avoided or minimized through implementation of APMs and mitigation measures, and thereby reduced to a less-than-significant level. Nevertheless, the potential exists for a cumulatively considerable incremental contribution to a significant cumulative impact. This cumulative impact is analyzed further below.
Cultural Resources	n/a	The impacts of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives related to cultural resources would be site-specific and would be avoided or minimized through implementation of APMs and mitigation measures. These impacts would be less than significant on their own and would not result in a significant cumulative impact. No further analysis is required.
Energy	n/a	Construction of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would be conducted efficiently, would improve the reliability/accessibility of electricity in the Paso Robles area, and would not impede future use of renewable energy or energy efficiency. In addition, APMs AIR-1 through AIR-3 and Mitigation Measure AQ-1 would further reduce impacts by requiring proper maintenance of equipment and vehicles, utilization of newer equipment and vehicles where feasible, and shutting off engines when

Resource Topic	Impact from Past, Present, and Probable Future Projects	Contribution of the Proposed Project, Reasonably Foreseeable Distribution Components, and Alternatives
		not in use. These impacts would be less than significant on their own and would not result in a significant cumulative impact. No further analysis is required.
Geology, Soils, Seismicity, and Paleontological Resources	n/a	The Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would have less-than-significant impacts related to geology, soils, seismicity, and paleontological resources because the Applicant would comply with applicable regulations and policies, as well as implement APMs to avoid or reduce loss of topsoil and potential impacts to paleontological resources. These impacts would be less than significant on their own and would not result in a significant cumulative impact. No further analysis is required.
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	n/a	The effects of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives related to hazards and hazardous materials would be site-specific, temporary, and less than significant with implementation of APMs. Therefore, construction and operation of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would not considerably contribute to a significant cumulative impact. No further analysis is required.
Hydrology and Water Quality	n/a	The impacts of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives on hydrology and water quality (e.g., stormwater discharges from construction areas or the substation) would be less than significant on the project level with implementation of APMs and compliance with the Construction General Permit (i.e., preparation and implementation of a stormwater pollution prevention plan [SWPPP]). The facilities would not require a substantial amount of water during construction or operation and would not substantially cumulatively affect groundwater supplies. As a result, the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would not considerably

Resource Topic	Impact from Past, Present, and Probable Future Projects	Contribution of the Proposed Project, Reasonably Foreseeable Distribution Components, and Alternatives
		contribute to a significant cumulative impact. No further analysis is required.
Land Use and Planning	n/a	The Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would not divide an established community or conflict with local plans. Transmission facilities are permitted in local zoning districts. Additionally, siting of transmission facilities under California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) jurisdiction is not subject to local land use regulations. As a result, the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would not considerably contribute to cumulative impact related to land use and planning. No further analysis is required.
Mineral Resources	n/a	The Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would not significantly affect the availability of mineral resources or impact known mineral resources sites in the area. As a result, they would not considerably contribute to a significant cumulative impact. No further analysis is required.
Noise	n/a	The Proposed Project and Alternatives SS-1, PLR-1A, PLR-1C, PLR-3, and SE-PLR-2 would have significant and unavoidable noise impacts, particularly due to the use of helicopters near sensitive receptors during construction. <del>Other alternatives and</del> The reasonably foreseeable distribution components would generate noise, but this would be less than significant on the project level, <u>while the noise impacts of Alternative SE-1A would be less than significant with mitigation.</u> Due to the site-specific and temporary nature of the noise impacts from the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives, they would not considerably contribute to a significant cumulative impact. No further analysis is required.
Population and Housing	n/a	The Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would not induce population growth or displace



Resource Topic	Impact from Past, Present, and Probable Future Projects	Contribution of the Proposed Project, Reasonably Foreseeable Distribution Components, and Alternatives
		substantial numbers of people or residences. Therefore, they would not contribute to a cumulatively significant impact. No further analysis is required.
Public Services	n/a	The Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would not substantially affect public services, as they would not induce population growth. Compliance with existing laws and regulations and implementation of mitigation measures would avoid or minimize potential effects related to fire, which could tax existing public fire services. For these reasons, the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would not contribute considerably to a cumulatively significant impact. No further analysis is required.
Recreation	n/a	The impacts of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives on recreation would be largely site-specific, temporary, and less than significant. The Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would not increase population such as to potentially increase use of existing parks and recreational facilities or require construction of new recreational facilities. As a result, there would be no considerable contribution to a cumulatively significant impact. No further analysis is required.
Transportation	n/a	Impacts of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives on transportation would be largely site-specific, temporary, and less than significant. The Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would not create new housing or employment centers and would generate only minimal vehicle trips during operation. As a result, they would not contribute considerably to a cumulatively significant impact. No further analysis is required.

<b>Resource Topic</b>	<b>Impact from Past, Present, and Probable Future Projects</b>	<b>Contribution of the Proposed Project, Reasonably Foreseeable Distribution Components, and Alternatives</b>
Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs)	n/a	Construction of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives could uncover buried resources that could be determined to be TCRs; however, these effects would be avoided or minimized through implementation of APMs and mitigation measures. Due to these measures and the fact that the potential impacts to TCRs would be site-specific, the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would not considerably contribute to a significant cumulative impact. No further analysis is required.
Utilities and Service Systems	n/a	The Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would have less-than-significant impacts on utilities and service systems and would not contribute considerably to a cumulatively significant impact. As noted above, the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would not substantially increase population, such as to potentially require increased utility service, and would not require substantial water, wastewater, or solid waste service during construction or operation. No further analysis is required.
Wildfire	n/a	The Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would have potential to cause accidental ignition of a wildfire due to use of combustion-engine equipment during construction. Additionally, addition of electrified equipment and power lines could increase wildfire risk, although compliance with existing laws and regulations and (with the exception of the No Project Alternative) implementation of mitigation measures would reduce these potential impacts to a less than significant level. In general, the impact on wildfire risk would be site-specific and would not constitute a considerable contribution to a cumulatively significant impact. No further analysis is required.

## Impact CUM-1. Cumulative Effects on Aesthetics

### *Proposed Project*

Several of the projects identified in Table 6-2 would affect the visual character of the same area as the Proposed Project, although these effects would be largely temporary. Caltrans' highway improvements on State Route (SR) 46 at Union Road would affect views along that 2.5-mile stretch of roadway during construction but would not result in substantial permanent changes to visual character. Other projects, such as the Hilton Garden Inn and Creston Road Duplexes, would adversely affect the visual character and quality of the area during the construction phase, but would not be expected to substantially affect aesthetics over the long-term.

As discussed in Section 4.1, "Aesthetics," the Proposed Project's new 70 kV power line segment would have a significant and unavoidable impact on the long-term visual character along the Golden Hill Road portion of the alignment. The Estrella Substation also would permanently alter the sites' visual character from a rural/agricultural setting to a more industrial environment. While implementation of APM AES-2 and Mitigation Measure AES-1 would reduce the adverse effects, it would not reduce them to a level that is less than significant.

None of the other projects identified in Table 6-2 would permanently affect aesthetics in a similar way to the Proposed Project (e.g., through addition of above-ground industrial infrastructure); however, the construction activities for the other projects would result in similar temporary aesthetic impacts. Additionally, depending on the final design of the development projects (i.e., Projects 2 through 6 and 8), these projects could adversely affect the existing visual quality and character, particularly if the buildings and above-ground facilities are not well-designed and compatible with the surrounding landscape. In combination with the Proposed Project's aesthetic impacts, this would be a significant cumulative impact.

Overall, the Proposed Project would add to on-going impacts to the area from human development and would make a cumulatively considerable contribution to this significant cumulative impact. Apart from the mitigation measure already prescribed for the Proposed Project (i.e., Mitigation Measure AES-1), no other feasible mitigation is available to address this impact. Therefore, the Proposed Project's contribution to this cumulative impact would be **significant and unavoidable**.

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

Several of the projects identified in Table 6-2 would affect the visual character of the same area as Alternative SE-PLR-2. Construction of an assisted living facility at South River Road and Serenade Drive would be consistent with the surrounding area. Development of the Paso Robles Gateway Project would involve development of 170 acres with a hotel, conference center, and resort residential units; although this project would be located on the opposite (west) side of Hwy 46 from Alternative SE-PLR-2 facilities, the change in visual character would be substantial.

Alternative SE-PLR-2 would have significant impacts on long-term visual character along South River Road to Santa Ysabel Avenue. The new power line under Alternative SE-PLR-2 would change the visual character and quality of views of the landscape and would be noticeable to motorists and residences in the surrounding area. In particular, the segment along South River Road to Santa Ysabel Avenue would adversely affect the existing visual character and quality of

views, as this area is characterized by mature trees lining the road and rolling hills. Even with implementation of APM AES-2 and Mitigation Measure AES-1, the impacts would remain significant and unavoidable. In combination with the impacts of projects discussed in Table 6-2, Alternative SE-PLR-2 would contribute to a significant cumulative impact with regard to the area's existing visual character. Further, Alternative SE-PLR-2 would make a cumulatively considerable contribution to this significant cumulative impact. Apart from the mitigation measure already prescribed for Alternative SE-PLR-2 (i.e., Mitigation Measure AES-1), no other feasible mitigation is available to address this impact. Thus, Alternative SE-PLR-2's contribution to this cumulative impact would be **significant and unavoidable**.

### ***Other Alternatives and Reasonably Foreseeable Distribution Components***

Aesthetic impacts of the other alternatives (with the exception of the No Project Alternative) would be less than significant with implementation of APM AES-1, AES-2 and Mitigation Measure AES-1. Viewer concerns and exposure for these alternatives are generally lower than for the Proposed Project; therefore, effects on these areas' visual character and visual quality are also lower. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-1 ensures that the approved project includes landscaping, materials, and paint colors appropriate for project features and reduces visual contrast to the surrounding environment. For these reasons, other alternatives would not make a considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact. Likewise, the reasonably foreseeable distribution components would not substantially affect aesthetics, such as to result in considerable contribution to a cumulative impact. While the reasonably foreseeable distribution components would degrade the existing visual character or quality to some degree, the distribution components would complete gaps in the existing distribution network, which already contains these types of facilities. Therefore, they would not substantially change existing conditions. Additionally, portions of the reasonably foreseeable distribution components, such as the distribution line segment north of the Estrella Substation site, which would pass through agricultural fields, would not be readily viewable from public locations. The No Project Alternative would have no effect on aesthetics. Therefore, the cumulative impact would be **less than significant**.

## **Impact CUM-2. Cumulative Effects on Agriculture and Forestry Resources**

### ***Proposed Project***

The Paso Robles Gateway Project is located 0.8-mile west of the reconductoring segment for the Proposed Project and involves development of 170 acres, some of which is designated Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (e.g., development of a hotel, conference center, and resort residential units.) This project may also require temporary staging and construction work areas on adjacent lands under agricultural use and/or mapped as Important Farmland, resulting in temporary impacts to these uses. In the case of permanent conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural uses, development required for the Paso Robles Gateway Project would be considered significant. Temporary impacts to Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland would be significant if agricultural uses/crops were not adequately restored following construction and/or if soil productivity were adversely affected over the long term (e.g., due to soil compaction). This project, coupled with the Proposed Project, would result in a significant cumulative impact with regard to the conversion of Important Farmland to non-agricultural uses.

As discussed in Section 4.2, “Agricultural Resources,” permanent conversion of agricultural land would occur from the Proposed Project from removal of existing vineyards at the substation site and removal of existing vineyard and row crops for the placement of structures as part of the 70 kV power line route construction. While implementation of Mitigation Measure AG-1 would ensure protection and preservation of agricultural lands elsewhere in the County, contribution of funds to the California Farmland Conservancy Fund would not fully offset the significant impact (because it would not create any new Important Farmland). Implementation of APM AG-1 would reduce the severity of the temporary effects of construction on the agricultural uses along the Alternative PLR-1A alignment, and Mitigation Measure AG-2 would reduce potential for adverse long-term construction-related impacts.

Due to the permanent conversion of Farmland, and in combination with on-going conversion of Farmland from other past, present, reasonably foreseeable future projects in the area, the Proposed Project would make a cumulatively considerable contribution to this significant cumulative impact. No other feasible mitigation is available to reduce this impact. Therefore, the Project’s contribution to this cumulative impact would be **significant and unavoidable**.

### ***Alternatives PLR-1A, PLR-1C, and SE-PLR-2***

The Paso Robles Gateway Project is located 0.8-mile west of Alternatives PLR-1A, PLR-1C, and SE-PLR-2; and as discussed above, the project involves development of 170 acres, some of which is located within designated Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. This project may require temporary staging and construction work areas on adjacent lands under agricultural use and/or mapped as Important Farmland, resulting in temporary impacts to these uses. This project, coupled with Alternatives PLR-1A, PLR-1C, and SE-PLR-2, would result in a significant cumulative impact with regard to the conversion of Important Farmland to non-agricultural uses.

While permanent conversions of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland from Alternatives PLR-1A, PLR-1C, and SE-PLR-2 would be both small in acreage and isolated at pole locations spaced hundreds of feet apart (and, therefore, unlikely to substantially affect operations in the remainder of affected fields); these conversions would still be considered significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AG-1 would reduce the severity of impacts, but not to a level that is less than significant. Implementation of APM AG-1 and Mitigation Measure AG-2 would reduce the severity of the temporary effects of construction on the agricultural uses along the Alternative PLR-1A, PLR-1C, and SE-PLR-2 alignments.

Overall, due to the permanent conversion of Farmland, Alternatives PLR-1A, PLR-1C, and SE-PLR-2 would make a cumulatively considerable contribution to this significant cumulative impact. For Alternative PLR-1A, PLR-1C, and SE-PLR-2, the contribution to this cumulative impact would be **significant and unavoidable**.

### ***Other Alternatives and Reasonably Foreseeable Distribution Components***

None of the other alternatives, nor the reasonably foreseeable distribution components, would significantly-substantially affect agricultural-sensitive farmland resources at the project level. As discussed in Section 4.2, these facilities would either be sited in areas of lesser agricultural value (i.e., not Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland) or would

otherwise not result in conversion of Important Farmland. Thus, these alternatives and the reasonably foreseeable distribution components would not considerably contribute to cumulative impacts to agriculture and forestry resources, including on-going conversion of Farmland from other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Thus, this impact would be **less than significant**.

### **Impact CUM-3. Cumulative Effects on Biological Resources**

#### ***Proposed Project, Reasonably Foreseeable Distribution Components, and All Alternatives***

Cumulative projects may have significant impacts on biological resources related to special-status species, sensitive habitats, federally protected or state-protected wetlands and waters, movement of native wildlife, or conflicts with local policies or habitat conservation plans. Development of the Paso Robles Gateway Project, for example, would convert 170 acres of undeveloped land to commercial and residential uses, potentially affecting biological resources. Caltrans' highway improvements on Hwy 46 beginning at Union Road would affect a 2.5-mile stretch of roadway and could pose a barrier to wildlife movement. In combination with the impacts of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and all alternatives, these cumulative projects would result in a significant cumulative impact on biological resources.

The Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and all alternatives (with the exception of the No Project Alternative) would result in significant impacts on biological resources, including burrowing owl, golden eagle, bald eagle, Swainson's hawk, nesting birds, pallid and Townsend's big-eared bat, Monterey dusky-footed woodrat, Salinas pocket mouse, American badger, and San Joaquin kit fox; riparian habitat, aquatic habitat, and blue oak woodland; and jurisdictional waters. However, these impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of the APMs and mitigation measures (Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3, and BIO-4) identified in Section 4.4, "Biological Resources." These measures would ensure that impacts on protected species, communities, and habitats are reduced to a level that would protect their continued existence. The No Project Alternative would have no effect on biological resources and would not require mitigation.

Thus, the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to this significant cumulative impact. The contribution of the Proposed Project, reasonably foreseeable distribution components, and alternatives cumulative impact would be **less than significant with mitigation**.