

## 1.1 AESTHETICS

The following discussion evaluates the potential changes in impacts associated with aesthetics and the conclusions from the Proponent’s Environmental Assessment (PEA) with the incorporation of the Proposed Project’s design modifications as described in the redlined version of Chapter 3 – Project Description. The table below summarizes the impact determination from the PEA and the impact determinations with the incorporation of the design modifications.

Would the project:	PEA Impact Determination	Impact Determination with Design Modifications
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	No Impact	No Impact
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	No Impact	No Impact
c) In nonurbanized 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?	Less-than-Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	Less-than-Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact

### Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

#### *Construction, Operations and Maintenance*

#### LSPGC and PG&E Components

**No Impact.** The Proposed Project component design modifications would not be located near a scenic vista. As a result, and consistent with the PEA, no impacts would occur.

### Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

#### *Construction, Operation and Maintenance*

#### LSPGC and PG&E Components

**No Impact.** The proposed PG&E 500 kV Transposition Structure D in Contra Costa County would be located approximately 3 miles southeast of State Route (SR-) 160, which is a state scenic highway (California Department of Transportation [Caltrans] 2024). Because this transposition structure would be located within an existing transmission line right-of-way (ROW), it would be consistent with the existing development in the area. There are no scenic resources within 5 miles of the other transposition structures. The design modifications to the remaining Proposed Project components would not change the proximity to scenic resources as discussed in the PEA. Further, the design modifications would not necessitate the removal of

trees, rock outcroppings, or the demolition of historic buildings. As a result, and consistent with the PEA, no impacts would occur.

**Would the project, in nonurbanized 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?**

### *Construction*

#### LSPGC Components

**Less-than-Significant Impact.** Construction-related visual impacts from the design modifications to the LSPGC Proposed Project components would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of Project area and its surroundings. The design modifications would occur in the same general locations using similar construction methods. The design modifications to the proposed LSPGC 230 kV Overhead Segment would replace the six-pole guyed structure and in-river transition structure with two onshore 230 kV riser poles and reduce the number of submarine cables from six to four. As a result, the duration of construction in and around the Delta would reduce the duration of active construction and any associated visual changes. As a result, and consistent with the PEA, impacts would continue to be less than significant.

#### PG&E Components

**Less-than-Significant Impact.** Construction-related visual impacts from the design modifications to the PG&E Proposed Project components would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the Proposed Project area and its surroundings. Construction at the four proposed PG&E 500 kV Transposition Structures locations would introduce temporary changes in visual character; however, construction would occur within an existing PG&E right-of-way (ROW) that is mostly within land designated for agricultural use and not near dense population centers. As stated in the PEA, Construction Measure AES-1 would be implemented to ensure construction areas are maintained in a clean and orderly state to reduce impacts associated with temporary construction activities, including minor ground disturbances. As a result, and consistent with the PEA, impacts would continue to be less than significant.

### *Operation and Maintenance*

#### LSPGC and PG&E Components

**Less-than-Significant Impact.** The design modifications associated with the proposed LSPGC 230 kV Overhead Segment would decrease the overall permanent visual impact to surrounding areas by replacing the six-pole guyed structure and in-river transition structure with two onshore 230 kV riser poles. This change would reduce visual impacts near the north shore of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, which is utilized by the public for boating and other recreational purposes. While the proposed PG&E 500 kV Transposition Structures would introduce new permanent structures, they would be located within the existing PG&E ROW and mostly within agricultural land that is not subject to dense population centers where people may have a direct view of the structures. As a result, they would represent a minor incremental

change to the visual character in the vicinity. Consistent with the PEA, impacts would continue to be less than significant.

### **Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?**

#### *Construction*

##### LSPGC and PG&E Components

**Less-than-Significant Impact.** Construction activities associated with the design modifications to the Proposed Project components would not create a new source of light that would adversely affect daytime views in the area. As stated in the PEA, glare from construction equipment could occur depending on the time of day and the position of a viewer relative to the construction equipment; however, such glare would be transient and ephemeral, and associated impacts would be less than significant. In addition, if night work is needed to complete construction activities, applicant-proposed measure AES-1 would be implemented to ensure that staging yard lighting is directed on site and shielded to reduce light escape. As a result, and consistent with the PEA, impacts would continue to be less than significant.

#### *Operation and Maintenance*

##### LSPGC Components

**Less-than-Significant Impact.** The design modifications to the proposed LSPGC Collinsville Substation would not affect the equipment, finishes, or lighting requirements at the site. As described previously, the design modifications to the proposed LSPGC 230 kV Overhead Segment would reduce the total number of structures, including removing the in-river transition structure and any associated lights or markings from the Delta. The remaining LSPGC Components would be installed underground or would be unchanged by the design modifications. As a result, the design modifications would not add any sources of light or glare, and consistent with the PEA, impacts would continue to be less than significant.

##### PG&E Components

**Less-than-Significant Impact.** The four proposed PG&E 500 kV Transposition Structures would not cause additional glare or significantly affect day or nighttime views in the Proposed Project area. The structures would be constructed within an existing PG&E ROW, mostly on agricultural land that is not subject to direct public view. In addition, these structures would be visually similar to the other transmission line structures in the area. As a result, and consistent with the PEA, impacts would continue to be less than significant.

### **References**

Caltrans. 2024. Scenic Highways. Online. <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways>. Site visited January 2025.