



**PG&E Shepherd Substation Project
Addendum to
Final Initial Study/Mitigated
Negative Declaration**

SCH# 2012051067

March 2013

PG&E Shepherd Substation Project

**Addendum to
Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration**

March 2013

SCH# 2012051067

Prepared by:

California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Panorama Environmental, Inc.
One Embarcadero Center, Suite 740
San Francisco, CA 94111
650-373-1200

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction.....	1-1
1.1	Background	1-1
1.2	CEQA Compliance	1-1
2	Description of Project Modification	2-1
2.1	Power Line Poles	2-1
2.2	Estimated Ground Disturbance.....	2-1
2.3	Schedule.....	2-5
3	Environmental Analysis.....	3-1
3.1	Aesthetics.....	3-1
3.2	Agriculture and Forestry Resources	3-1
3.3	Air Quality/Greenhouse Gases.....	3-1
3.4	Biological Resources	3-2
3.5	Cultural Resources	3-2
3.6	Hazards and Hazardous Materials.....	3-2
3.7	Hydrology	3-2
3.8	Noise	3-3
3.9	Traffic	3-3
3.10	Cumulative Impacts.....	3-3
4	Conclusion.....	4-1
5	References.....	5-1

List of Tables

Table 2.2-1: Revised Estimated Ground Disturbance	2-5
---	-----

List of Figures

Figure 1.1-1: Project Location	1-2
Figure 2.1-1: Proposed New Pole Location	2-2
Figure 2.1-2: Proposed Modifications to Power Line Pole Locations (South)	2-3
Figure 2.1-3: Proposed Modifications to Power Line Pole Locations (North).....	2-4

Table of Contents

This page is intentionally left blank.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) submitted a Permit to Construct (PTC) the Shepherd Substation Project (project) in December 2010 (Application No. 10-12-003). The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) circulated a Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the proposed project for a 30-day public review period starting May 23, 2012. CPUC prepared a Final IS/MND for the project in January 2013 (CPUC 2013). CPUC has not issued a decision on the project.

The proposed project is located in Fresno County, California (Figure 1.1-1). The proposed project includes:

- A 115/21-kilovolt (kV) electrical substation
- Approximately 1.5 miles of 115-kV power line
- Extension of an existing distribution line
- Three new underground distribution lines

PG&E submitted documentation to CPUC in February 2013 describing a modification to the project that would involve addition of a single power pole and relocation of other power poles along the proposed 115-kV power line alignment. This Addendum to the Final IS/MND (Addendum) has been prepared to evaluate the potential impacts of this project modification. The Addendum will be considered by CPUC prior to making a decision on the project.

1.2 CEQA COMPLIANCE

This document has been prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA Guidelines §15164 provides:

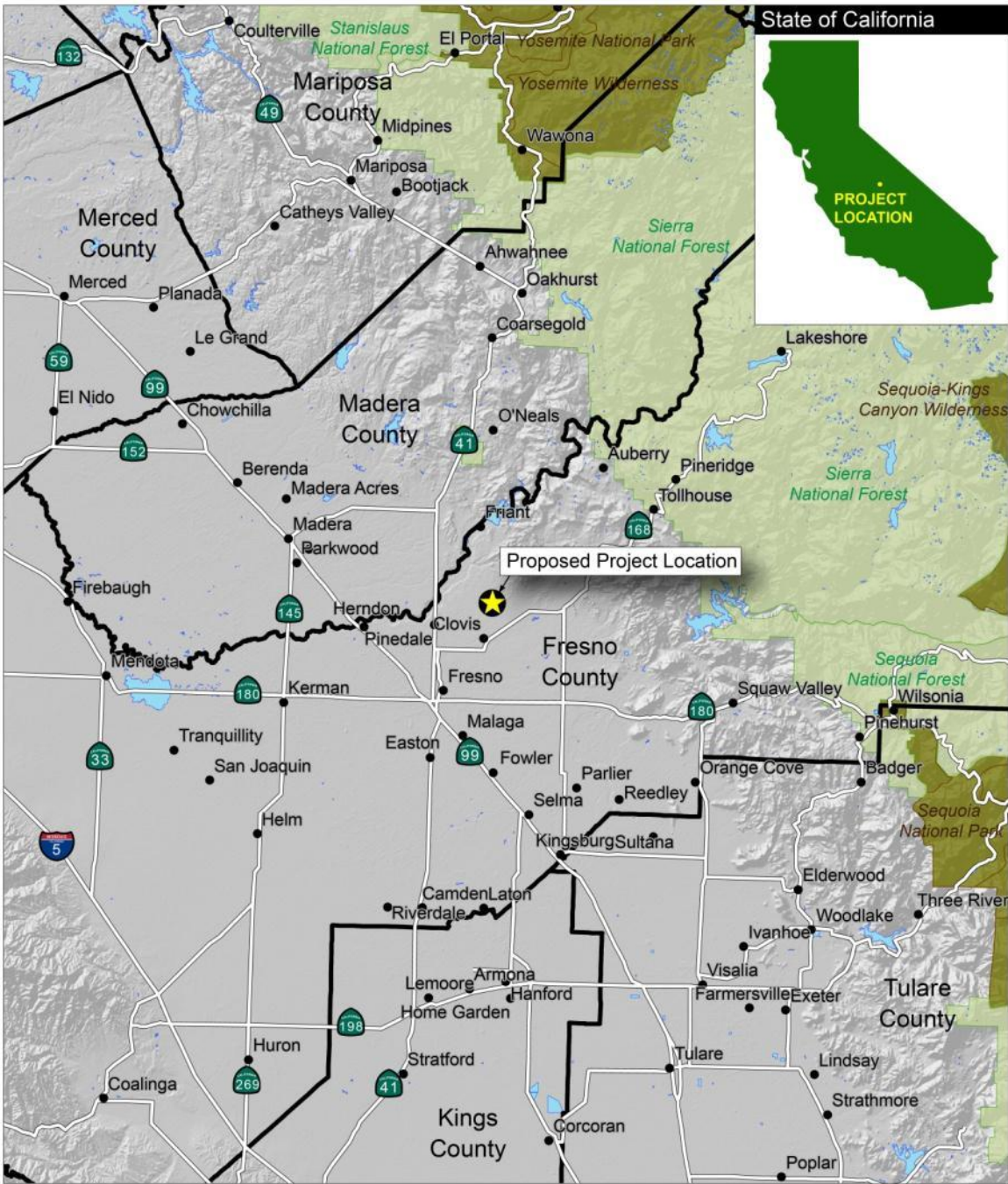
(b) An addendum to an adopted negative declaration may be prepared if only minor technical changes or additions are necessary or none of the conditions described in Section 15162 calling for the preparation of a subsequent EIR or negative declaration have occurred.

(c) An addendum need not be circulated for public review but can be included in or attached to the final EIR or adopted negative declaration.

(d) The decision making body shall consider the addendum with the final EIR or adopted negative declaration prior to making a decision on the project.

Introduction

Figure 1.1-1: Project Location

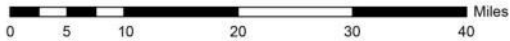


SOURCE: ESRI 2012, PG&E 2012, and Panorama Environmental 2012

Scale: 1:1,000,000

LEGEND

- Proposed Project Location
- Interstate Highway
- State Route



PANORAMA
ENVIRONMENTAL, INC.

Introduction

CEQA Guidelines §15162 identifies the conditions that trigger the need to prepare a subsequent EIR or negative declaration:

“When an EIR has been certified or a negative declaration adopted for a project, no subsequent EIR shall be prepared for the project unless the lead agency determines, on the basis of substantial evidence in the light of the whole record that:

(1) Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous ... negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;

(2) Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous ... negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant impacts; or

(3) New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous ... negative declaration was adopted, shows any of the following:

(A) The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous ... negative declaration;

(B) Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR;

(C) Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or

(D) Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.”

The CPUC has not yet adopted the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project. This Addendum has been prepared to address minor additions to the project. As described in the Addendum, the proposed project modification is not a substantial change to the project and would not result in any new significant environmental impacts or any substantial increases in the severity of previously identified significant impacts. The modifications do not otherwise trigger the need to prepare a subsequent Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or negative declaration pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15162. Therefore, CPUC has determined that a subsequent EIR or negative declaration is not required and an Addendum to the IS/MND is the appropriate level of CEQA review to address PG&E’s proposed changes to the project. The analysis in the Addendum provides the basis for this conclusion.

2 DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT MODIFICATION

2.1 POWER LINE POLES

PG&E plans to add one tubular steel pole (TSP) to the proposed 115-kV power line for the project and relocate other proposed TSPs in the alignment. The addition of one TSP and relocation of proposed TSPs would not change the location of the proposed power line alignment. All TSPs would be located within the power line corridor analyzed in the Final IS/MND (CPUC 2013).

The Final IS/MND prepared in January 2013 included 17 TSPs and one drop-down pole. The number of TSPs would increase to 18 (for a total of 19 power poles) to avoid potential conflicts with the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District's (FMFCD's) plans for a flood control channel located north of Behymer Avenue.

The location of the new TSP is shown on Figure 2.1-1. The originally proposed TSP that was located within the FMFCD planned flood control channel (shown in blue on Figure 2.1-1) has been relocated approximately 320 feet north along the alignment so that the power line would span the planned flood control channel. Relocating the pole north to avoid the planned flood control channel increases the power line span. As a result, an additional TSP is required just north of Behymer Avenue.

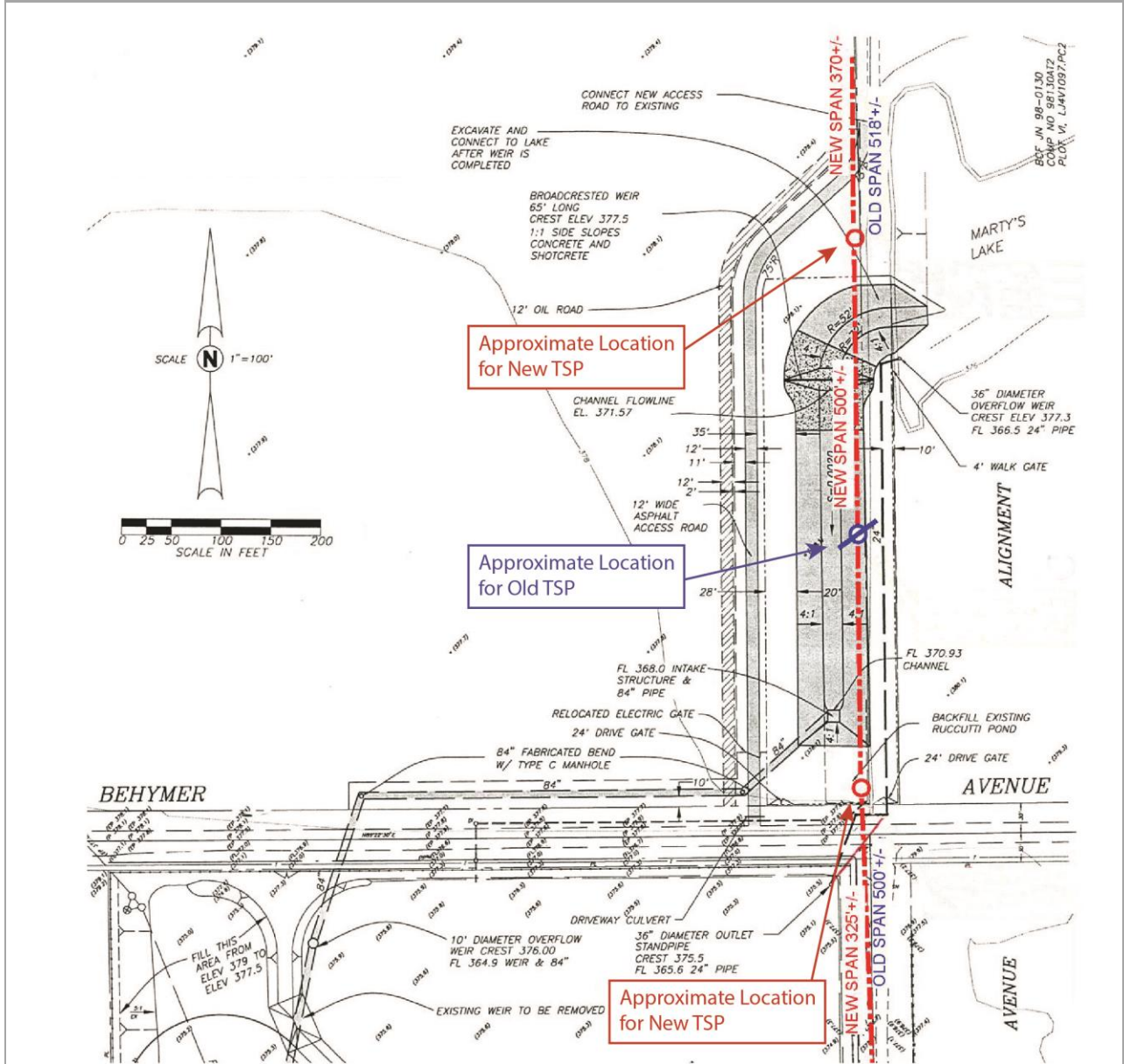
Other proposed TSP locations along the power line alignment would be adjusted to balance out the proposed spans. The current and previously proposed power pole locations are shown on Figures 2.1-2 and 2.1-3.

2.2 ESTIMATED GROUND DISTURBANCE

The additional TSP would result in increased temporary and permanent ground disturbance as shown in Table 2.2-1. Estimated temporary disturbance from the TSPs would increase from 3.06 acres to 3.24 acres. The estimated permanent disturbance from the TSPs would increase from approximately 0.17 acre to 0.18 acre. The amount of estimated ground disturbance for other project features would not change, but the location of 10 poles would change.

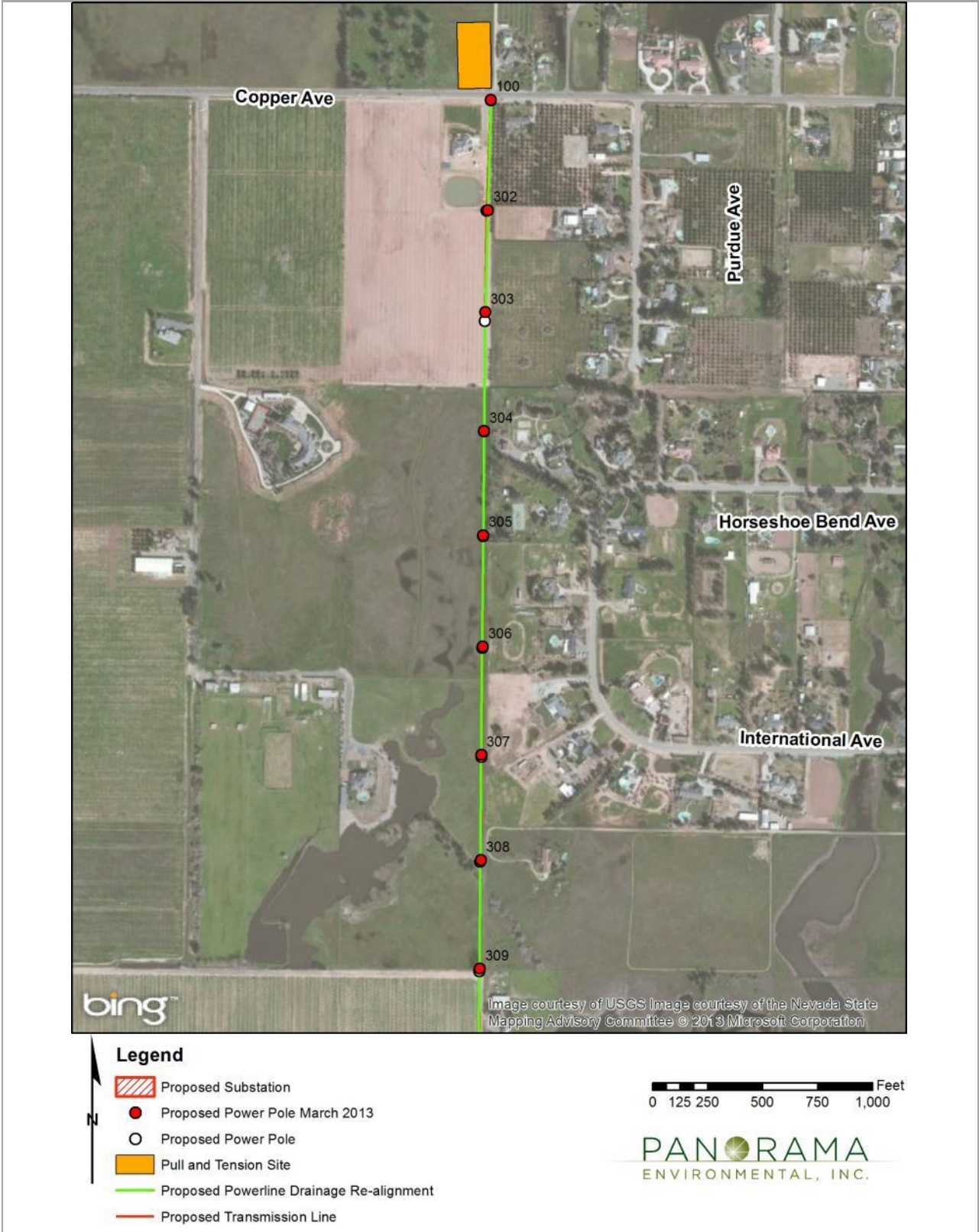
Description of Project Modification

Figure 2.1-1: Proposed New Pole Location



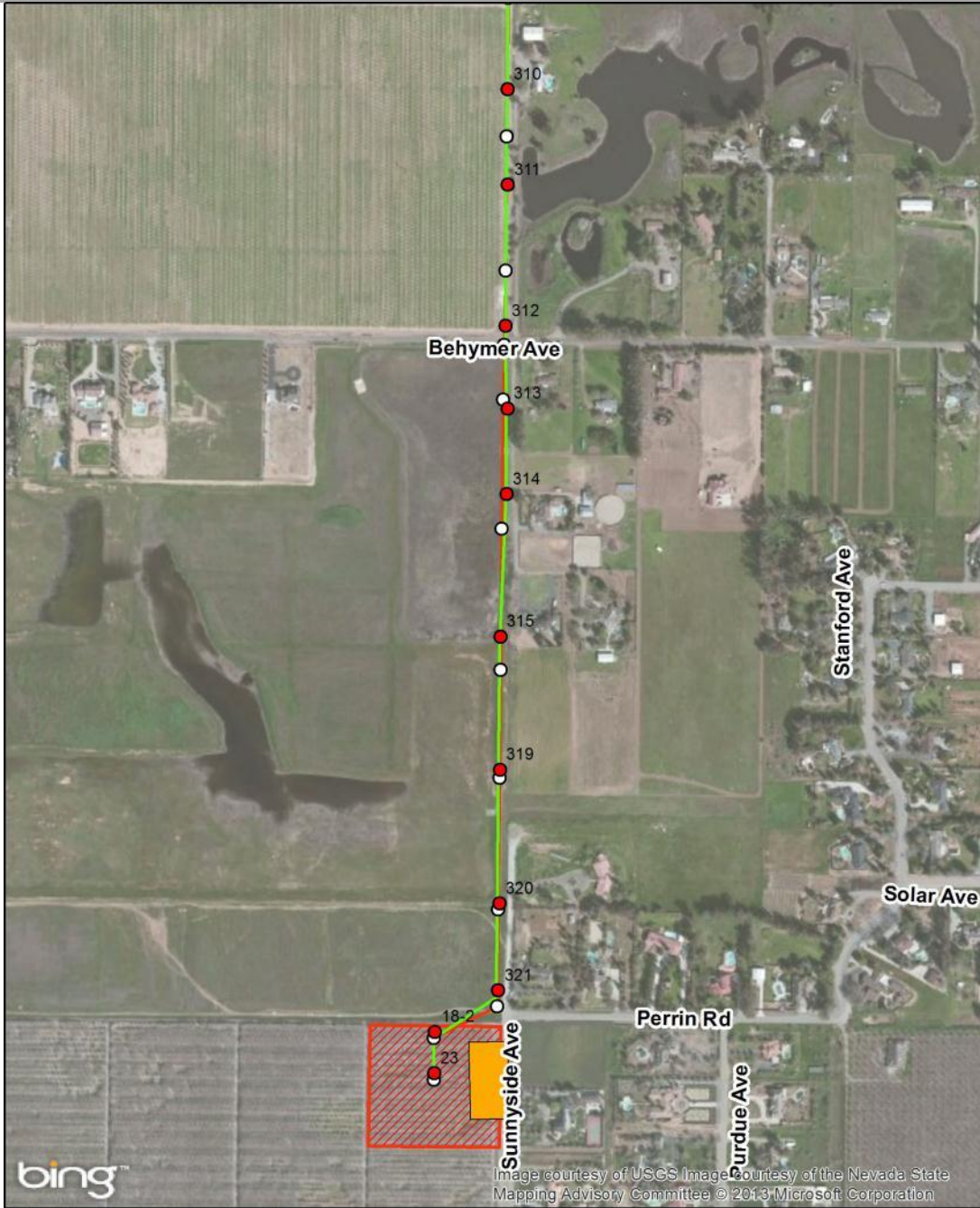
Description of Project Modification

Figure 2.1-2: Proposed Modifications to Power Line Pole Locations (South)

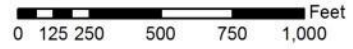


Description of Project Modification

Figure 2.1-3: Proposed Modifications to Power Line Pole Locations (North)



- Legend**
-  Proposed Substation
 -  Proposed Power Pole March 2013
 -  Proposed Power Pole
 -  Pull and Tension Site
 -  Proposed Powerline Drainage Re-alignment
 -  Proposed Transmission Line



PANORAMA
ENVIRONMENTAL, INC.

Description of Project Modification

Table 2.2-1: Revised Estimated Ground Disturbance

Project Feature	Estimated Ground Disturbance per Site	Number of Sites	Total Estimated Temporary Disturbance Area	Total Estimated Permanent Disturbance Area
Substation	5 acres	1	5.00 acres	5.00 acres
TSPs	50-foot radius	<i>18¹</i>	3.24 acres	0.18 acre
Drop-down Pole	50-foot radius	1	0.18 acre	0.01 acre
Power Line Stringing Setup Areas (Pull and Tension Sites)	150 feet x 300 feet	2 ²	1.03 acres	—
Underground Distribution Circuits	15,200 linear feet x 40 feet	1	14.00 acres	—
Distribution Line Wood Pole Replacements	40 feet x 100 feet	30	2.7 acres	0.01 acre
Distribution Stringing Setup Areas (Pull and Tension Sites)	50 feet x 10 feet	2	0.10 acre	—
In-ground vaults	5.5 feet x 9.5 feet	18	0.02 acre	0.02 acre
Total			26.27 acres	5.22 acres
<i>Note:</i>				
¹ Italic font is used to indicate changes from the Final IS/MND.				
² The acreage for the pull and tension site within the substation is accounted for in the temporary disturbance for the substation.				

2.3 SCHEDULE

The addition of one TSP will increase the construction period for the power line by up to 4 days. It would take approximately 2 to 3 days for construction of the foundation and 1 day for installation of the pole.

3 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

3.1 AESTHETICS

The Final IS/MND analyzed potential aesthetic impacts from the 115-kV power line. The additional TSP and relocated TSPs would be located within the alignment that was previously analyzed in the Final IS/MND. The additional TSP would have the same form, line, color, texture, patterns, and scale as the other TSPs included in the proposed project and previously analyzed in the Final IS/MND. The addition of one TSP to the proposed project would increase the total number of power poles by one, from 18 to 19, which would result in a minimal change to aesthetic impacts from the project. The additional pole would be located approximately the same distance from the nearest residence as the previously proposed pole. The subsequent changes to pole locations would move one pole approximately 120 feet closer to a residence located east of the power line. The proposed addition of a TSP near Behymer Avenue would not result in new or more severe aesthetic impacts with implementation of the Applicant Proposed Measures (APMs) and mitigation measures identified in the Final IS/MND, which include the use of non-specular conductor and galvanized TSPs.

3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

The additional TSP and relocation of proposed TSPs would result in a 0.18-acre increase in temporary impacts to Unique Farmland and would convert an additional 0.01 acre of Farmland to non-agricultural use. This additional 0.2-percent increase in permanent impacts to agricultural resources from 5.03 to 5.04 acres would not be significant and would not be substantially greater than the impacts to agricultural resources considered in the Final IS/MND.

3.3 AIR QUALITY/GREENHOUSE GASES

Installation of the additional TSP would result in a minor increase in air quality and greenhouse gas emissions as a result of the increase in the area of disturbance and the work required for installation of the additional TSP. The additional TSP would increase the construction duration by up to 4 days and the area of disturbance by approximately 0.18 acre (i.e., during the short-term construction period and periodic maintenance activities). Addition of one TSP to the project would result in a minor increase in emissions but would not result in significant air quality or greenhouse gas emissions. The project modification would not result in a new impact or increase the severity of air quality and greenhouse gas emissions impacts with implementation of the APMs and mitigations measures identified in the Final IS/MND.

3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The entire power line alignment and a 300-foot-wide buffer on either side of the alignment have been evaluated for biological resources (PG&E 2010). No special-status species were identified within the power line alignment or buffer area. The power line alignment will not change as a result of the proposed modification. No poles would be located within wetlands or riparian areas as a result of the proposed modification. The project modification would not result in new or more severe impacts to biological resources. All APMs and mitigation measures identified in the Final IS/MND would be implemented for the new and relocated poles to reduce potential impacts to biological resources, including nesting birds.

3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

The entire power line alignment and a 10-meter-wide buffer on either side of the alignment have been evaluated for cultural resources (Bassett 2010). The project modification would be located within the previously assessed power line alignment; therefore, no additional cultural resources investigation is required. There are no cultural resources at the pole locations proposed for the project modification. The additional pole would not result in new or increased impacts to cultural resources. The project modification would comply with the APMs and mitigation measures for cultural resources identified in the Final IS/MND, including measures for discovery of buried resources or human remains.

3.6 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Construction of the additional TSP would involve the use of hazardous materials such as gasoline, diesel fuel, hydraulic oils, equipment coolants, and waste that may include these materials. Use of these materials was evaluated in the Final IS/MND. Addition of one TSP to the project would result in a minor increase in the use of hazardous materials during construction activities but would not result in significant impacts from hazardous materials. The project modification would not create a new impact or increase the severity of impacts from hazardous materials with implementation of the APMs and mitigation measures for the use of hazardous materials identified in the Final IS/MND.

3.7 HYDROLOGY

The additional pole and relocated poles would be located within a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Approximately 3,000 feet of the power line alignment would be located within the SFHA, as stated in the Final IS/MND (CPUC 2013). The project modification would not change the power line alignment and would not increase the portion of the alignment that would be located within the SFHA. The additional TSP would be approximately 2 to 4 feet in diameter and would be located within FEMA Zone AH. Zone AH is a SFHA with a 1 percent chance of shallow flooding in any given year to depths of 1 to 3 feet. The additional pole would therefore displace approximately 13 to 150 cubic feet of water under shallow flooding conditions of 1 to 3 feet. Installation of the

additional TSP could result in minimal additional erosion at the pole site as a result of ground disturbance, which would cause a *de minimis* increase in the amount of sediment and pollutants in stormwater runoff. The additional pole would not create a new impact or increase the severity of the impacts to hydrology with implementation of the APMs and mitigation measures for hydrology identified in the Final IS/MND.

3.8 NOISE

The additional poles and relocated poles would be located within the power line alignment analyzed in the Final IS/MND. Construction of the additional and relocated poles would not change the sensitive receptors that would be impacted by noise from construction and maintenance of the project. The equipment that would be used for construction of the additional pole would be the same equipment used for project construction that was analyzed in the Final IS/MND. Addition of one TSP to the project would result in the same noise levels as previously analyzed in the Final IS/MND. The addition of the TSP would increase the length of time during which noise associated with construction is generated at the project site by up to 4 days; however, the minor increased duration in noise would not result in significant impacts. The proposed modification would not result in a new impact or increase the severity of noise impacts with implementation of the APMs identified in the Final IS/MND.

3.9 TRAFFIC

The additional TSP would be located near Behymer Avenue and could potentially result in temporary traffic delays along Behymer Avenue while crews access the work area or while traffic is routed around the work area for up to 4 days. The Final IS/MND analyzed traffic impacts associated with construction of the power line, including potential lane closures. The project modification would not create a new impact or increase the severity of impacts analyzed in the Final IS/MND with implementation of the APMs and mitigation measures identified in the Final IS/MND, including the requirement for a Traffic Management Plan.

3.10 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The project modification would not result in new or more severe cumulative impacts.

No other potentially significant impacts have been identified that would result from the proposed project modification.

4 CONCLUSION

The previous environmental document as herein amended may be used to fulfill the environmental review requirements of the current project. The current project meets the conditions for the application of State CEQA Guidelines §15164. The proposed project modification is not a substantial change to the project and would not result in any new significant environmental impacts or any substantial increases in the severity of previously identified significant impacts. The modifications do not otherwise trigger the need to prepare a subsequent Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or negative declaration pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15162. Therefore, preparation of a new EIR or negative declaration is not required to address the environmental resources discussed above.

5 REFERENCES

Bassett, Everett. 2010. Cultural Resources Inventory Report, Shepherd Substation Project, Fresno County, California. Prepared by Transcon Environmental, Inc. August 2010.

CPUC (California Public Utilities Commission) 2013. PG&E Shepherd Substation Project, Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. Prepared by Panorama Environmental, Inc. January 2013.

PG&E (Pacific Gas & Electric Company). 2010. Proponent's Environmental Assessment, Shepherd Substation Project. Prepared by Transcon Environmental, Inc. December 2010.