Chapter 18—Growth-Inducing and Cumulative Impacts

18.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses potential growth inducing and cumulative impacts related to the Tri-Valley project. CEQA requires a discussion of the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment, including projects that would remove obstacles to population growth. CEQA and CPUC Rule 17.1 also require a discussion of the cumulative effect of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and probable future projects. The project is proposed as a result of increasing growth in the Tri-Valley area, and implementation of the project would not result in any growth-inducing or cumulative environmental impacts.

18.2 Growth-Inducing Impacts

18.2.1 Significance Criteria

Consistent with Appendix G of the CEQA guidelines, the following criteria are used to evaluate whether the project will result in potential individual or cumulative growth-inducing impacts:

- Could the project, either directly or indirectly, foster economic or population growth?
- Could the project remove obstacles to growth in the area?
- Would the project provide new employment?
- Would the project provide access to previously inaccessible areas or extend public services to previously unserved areas?
- Would the project tax existing community services?
- Would the project cause development elsewhere?

18.2.2 Economic or Population Growth

As discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.3, Project Purpose and Need, the project is needed by the year 2002 to meet customer electric demand without overloading the existing electric facilities. PG&E is required by law to maintain adequate electrical service necessary to promote the safety, health, comfort, and convenience of the public (Public Utilities Code, Section 451). To determine what facilities will be needed to meet future demand for electricity, PG&E reviews and follows local government land use and development policies. Appendix B includes a table showing new residential and commercial development that is

either already underway, approved, or planned. For each development, the number of units planned per year is also shown.

Economic growth in the Tri-Valley area has produced an increase in electric demand. Based on new and approved residential and commercial development in the area, PG&E forecasts that electrical demand will increase by approximately 34 MW per year between 1998 and 2004. The total capacity shortfall as of 2002 will be approximately 36.2 MW. If the proposed new facilities are not in place by 2002, the electric system will not be able to reliably serve existing customers. Widespread overloading of the existing electric system will occur, resulting in electric service interruptions. The project is proposed in response to this problem and is designed to accommodate existing and approved new development in the Tri-Valley area. Therefore, the project itself will not directly or indirectly induce growth as discussed in the following sections.

18.2.3 Remove Obstacles to Growth

Lack of sufficient infrastructure in an area could be seen as an obstacle to growth because new development typically requires water, wastewater, roadway, and power facilities to be available before developments are approved by local jurisdictions. However, significant growth in the Tri-Valley area is presently occurring, and many more developments have been approved or are pending approval, regardless of the presence or absence of electric service. In fact, local jurisdictions and developers assume that electric service will be provided (because PG&E is required by law to provide it) regardless of where the development occurs. The lack of facilities for supplying electric power for new and proposed developments has not been an obstacle to current or proposed development. Because the proposed project is in response to this development, it will not remove any current obstacles to growth. It is unlikely that implementation of the project will facilitate additional growth in the Tri-Valley area because that growth is regulated by the local jurisdictions.

18.2.4 New Employment

The project will provide short-term construction employment but no permanent employment. Approximately 60 to 70 daily workers will be on the various job sites during peak construction periods. PG&E will draw the local labor pool from its existing workforce in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. PG&E will only use non-local labor for specialized skills not readily available locally. The limited, temporary nature of this employment will not result in long-term growth in the area.

18.2.5 Extended Access or Public Services

The proposed project does not require the extension of public services to previously unserved areas. PG&E currently provides electric service to the entire Tri-Valley area. As discussed previously, the project is in response to new and proposed growth approved by the local jurisdictions. The transmission lines are necessary to provide power to the substations and will not serve areas through which they pass. The project will require development of access roads as shown in Figure 2-13. These will be private roads maintained by PG&E and will not be accessible to the public. PG&E does not currently propose to provide public access along the transmission line rights-of-way.

18.2.6 Existing Community Services

The project will not tax existing community services. The project will not require water, wastewater, or permanent solid waste services. The need for city- and county-provided services, such as road improvements, law enforcement, and fire protection, will be negligible (see Chapter 15).

18.2.7 New Development

As discussed previously, the proposed project will not provide the occasion for new development, either in the Tri-Valley area or elsewhere, but is a response to existing and planned development. It will satisfy PG&E's statutory obligation to accommodate the demand that the market and local governments have projected. Established and locally supported patterns of development and growth carry with them a corresponding electrical demand that PG&E is obligated to anticipate and serve in order to avoid the consequences of electrical overload discussed in Chapter 2.

18.3 Cumulative Impacts

To determine the potential for cumulative impacts, PG&E contacted planning department staff at Contra Costa County, Alameda County, and the cities of Pleasanton, Livermore, San Ramon, and Dublin to identify any current, future, or proposed projects in the Tri-Valley Project area. A list of probable future projects in the Tri-Valley Project area is provided in Appendix B. These projects are either approved or pending approval by the local jurisdiction, as indicated in the table, and some are already under construction in the project vicinity. All of the projects are residential or commercial developments. There are no known electric power projects or related projects proposed for the area.

18.3.1 Significance Criteria

Consistent with the revised CEQA guidelines (Section 15130), a project could have a significant cumulative impact if a change in the environment resulted from the incremental impact of the proposed project when added to other closely related past, present, and probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, projects taking place over a period of time.

18.3.2 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

This section analyzes whether the proposed project, when combined with other proposed projects in the area, would result in either short-term and long-term environmental impacts. Short-term impacts are those related primarily to project construction, and long-term impacts are those related primarily to permanent project features or operation of the project. In the Tri-Valley area, short-term construction impacts could include increased traffic, air emissions, and noise. Short-term construction-related impacts are not typically considered significant under CEQA. Long-term impacts could include those related to visual and biological resources.

Air Quality

As discussed in Chapter 10, construction and operation of the proposed project will not result in any appreciable contribution to air quality emissions or potentially significant impacts. Temporary air emissions would occur as a result of operating construction vehicles and equipment and from PM_{10} (dust) produced during grading activities. With implementation of standard dust suppression measures to reduce PM_{10}, impacts would be less than significant.

Air emissions from the proposed project in the North Area would result from construction of two substations on parcels less than 5 acres in size, construction of approximately 1 mile of new access road segments, and 100-foot areas of disturbance around each tower foundation. Taken into consideration with other proposed development in the North Area (Dublin Ranch, 1,333 acres, and implementation of the North Livermore Specific Plan, 3,211 acres), the incremental contribution of air emissions from the proposed project would not constitute a considerable contribution to cumulative impacts. This is also true for the South Area where construction of the overhead / underground transmission line would add a negligible contribution to the air emissions that could result from construction of proposed development in the area such as the 510-acre Bernal Property. There are no long-term air emissions associated with operation of the project; therefore, no contribution to cumulative impacts would result.

Transportation/Traffic

As discussed in Chapter 11, construction and operation of the proposed project will not result in any potentially significant transportation or traffic impacts. Except for the underground portion of the South Area transmission line, all construction will take place in rural open space areas where no traffic congestion presently exists. Most of the area proposed for the underground transmission line is already developed with residences and no other projects are proposed in this area. The construction schedule for other proposed development (Dublin Ranch and implementation of the North Livermore Specific Plan) in the rest of the project area is not known at this time. However, even if other projects were to take place in the same timeframe as the proposed project, the incremental contribution of PG&E vehicles using the same roadways to access substation and tower sites would not constitute a considerable contribution to cumulative transportation or traffic impacts. In addition, as proposed in the North Livermore Specific Plan, North Livermore Avenue will be widened to accommodate new development, reducing the likelihood of cumulative traffic impacts. There are no long-term transportation or traffic impacts associated with operation of the proposed project; therefore, no contribution to cumulative impacts would result.

Noise

As discussed in Chapter 12, construction and operation of the proposed project will not result in any potentially significant noise impacts. Temporary noise would likely affect nearby residents during construction of the South Area underground transmission line. However, there are no other known projects in this area that either currently generate noise or would generate noise in the future. The remainder of the project is located primarily in open space with no nearby receptors to noise. Operation of the North Livermore and Dublin Substations would generate low levels of noise that were determined to be less than

significant. Because proposed development in the area is planned to consist primarily of residential units, no other noise sources are anticipated.

Taken into consideration with other proposed development (Dublin Ranch, implementation of the North Livermore Specific Plan, and the Bernal Property), the incremental contribution of noise from construction and operation of the proposed project would not constitute a considerable contribution to cumulative impacts.

Aesthetics

As discussed in Chapter 6, construction and operation of the proposed project will not result in any significant impacts to visual resources with implementation of mitigation measures incorporated as part of the project. There are no known similar projects proposed in the Tri-Valley area that could impact visual resources. There are several existing PG&E transmission lines in the area, and the proposed project would add an additional transmission line in the North and South Areas. However, the impact of adding new transmission lines and substations to the existing visual landscape was fully analyzed in Chapter 6 and was determined to be less than significant. Therefore, the incremental contribution of new transmission lines from the proposed project would not constitute a considerable contribution to cumulative impacts.

Biological Resources

As discussed in Chapter 7, the proposed project could result in potentially significant impacts to biological resources. The incremental contribution of impacts to biological resources from the proposed project, when combined with other proposed projects in the Tri-Valley area, could be significant. Some of these impacts may be mitigated to less than significant levels; however, surveys for all species are not yet complete, and specific impacts have not been determined.