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CHAPTER 4 – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.12 POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-Than-Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4.12.0 Introduction

This section discusses the existing conditions and potential impacts to population and housing resulting from the Sierra Pacific Power Company (SPPCo) 625 and 650 Line Upgrade Project (project). The project is located in the north Lake Tahoe area in northeastern Placer County and southeastern Nevada County, and extends from the Town of Truckee to the unincorporated areas of Kings Beach and Tahoe City. Several census-designated places (CDPs) are located in the project area in unincorporated portions of Placer County. The CDPs that are adjacent to or crossed by the project components include Kings Beach, Sunnyside-Tahoe City, and Tahoe Vista. Because the project is being implemented to provide more reliable electrical service to the north Lake Tahoe area and will not extend into new areas, it will not have a significant impact on the local or regional population. No displacement of housing or people will result from the construction, operation, or maintenance of the proposed facilities.

4.12.1 Methodology

Data used to conduct demographic and economic analyses was obtained primarily from statistical reports published by the United States (U.S.) Census Bureau, the California Department of Finance, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the California Employment Development Department (EDD), as well as from literature searches and personal communication with agency personnel. Internet searches of government websites were also conducted.

4.12.2 Existing Conditions

Population

Table 4.12-1: Project Area Population Totals and Trends, provides the population totals and trend information for the counties, cities, and CDPs crossed by the project. As of 2008, Placer County's population of 341,945 residents accounted for approximately 0.9 percent of California's total population of 37,756,666, while Nevada County's population of 97,118 residents accounted for approximately 0.3 percent of the total population of the state. The Town of Truckee had approximately 16,185 residents in 2008, which accounted for 16.7 percent of Nevada County's total population.

According to 2000 U.S. Census Bureau data¹, Kings Beach accounted for approximately 1.2 percent of Placer County's total population² with 4,037 total residents, Sunnyside-Tahoe City accounted for 0.7 percent of the county's total with 1,761 total residents, and Tahoe Vista accounted for 0.7 percent of Placer County's total population with 1,668 total residents.

Table 4.12-1: Project Area Population Totals and Trends

CDP*/Town/County	2000 Census Total	2008 Census Total	Percent Increase 2000-2008	2010 Projection
Placer County	248,399	341,945	27.4	349,113
Kings Beach	4,037	Information Not Available (INA)	INA	INA
Sunnyside-Tahoe City	1,761	INA	INA	INA
Tahoe Vista	1,668	INA	INA	INA
Nevada County	92,033	97,118	9.5	102,649
Town of Truckee	13,864	16,185	14.3	INA

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2008

* The population totals for the CDPs are included in the Placer County total population.

Housing

Table 4.12-2: Project Area Total Housing Units and Vacancy Rate, summarizes statistical data gathered in 2000 by the U.S. Census for Placer County, Nevada County, and the Town of Truckee, as well as project-area CDPs (Kings Beach, Sunnyside-Tahoe City, and Tahoe Vista).

The U.S. Census estimated that Placer County had 107,302 housing units in 2000 and a vacancy rate of 13.0 percent. In 2000, Nevada County had a total of 44,282 housing units and a vacancy rate of 16.7 percent. These totals included the incorporated and unincorporated portions of the county as well as CDPs.

¹ Statistical data from 2000 is the most recent information available for these localities.

² Percentages were calculated using 2010 population estimates for Placer and Nevada counties.

Table 4.12-2: Project Area Total Housing Units and Vacancy Rate

CDP/Town/County	Total Housing Units	Percent Vacant
Placer County	107,302	13.0
Kings Beach	2,284	38.2
Sunnyside-Tahoe City	2,102	9.0
Tahoe Vista	1,265	9.0
Nevada County	44,282	16.7
Town of Truckee	9,787	47.2

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Approximately 77.6 percent of the total housing in Placer County is comprised of detached, single-family homes. In the incorporated areas, 75.9 percent of homes are detached, single-family units. In the unincorporated areas, 80.5 percent of homes are detached, single-family units. Incorporated areas have the highest percentage of high-density housing, with approximately 16.0 percent categorized as multiple-family structures with five or more units.

The majority of housing units in Nevada County are detached, single-family homes, which make up 81.6 percent of all housing units. Approximately 88.5 percent of housing units in unincorporated areas were detached, single-family homes, while in incorporated areas, detached, single-family homes made up 70.9 percent of all housing units.

Temporary Housing

The project area encompasses and is adjacent to various visitor accommodations. In 2003, the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association, which includes the communities of Kings Beach, Carnelian Bay, Tahoe City, and Tahoe Vista, as well as six other communities in the north Lake Tahoe area, reported that there were approximately 1,500 rooms or housing units available through various motels, hotels, and bed and breakfast establishments, that are capable of housing temporary construction personnel. These lodging establishments had a total average occupancy rate of 55 percent. In addition, the area has 7,825 vacation homes that are not considered the primary residence of the owner. Many of these secondary residences are rented to visitors to the area.

Employment and Income

Table 4.12-3: Project Area Employment Figures and Unemployment Range, provides a summary of the total employment and unemployment rates for the project area. In August 2009, unemployment rates were similar in Placer and Nevada counties, at 11.5 and 11.3 percent, respectively. The highest unemployment rate in the vicinity is found in Tahoe Vista, where the rate was 18.0 percent, as of August 2009.

According to U.S. Census Bureau data from 2007, the median annual household income was \$58,658 for Nevada County. For Placer County, the medial annual household income was \$69,667 (16.0 percent higher than Nevada County).

Table 4.12-3: Project Area Employment Figures and Unemployment Range

CDP*/Town/County	Total Employment (number employed)	Unemployment Rate (percent)
Placer County	156,400	11.5
Kings Beach	2,700	11.3
Sunnyside-Tahoe City	1,700	11.7
Tahoe Vista	1,300	18
Nevada County	44,680	11.3
Town of Truckee	8,720	9.3

Source: State of California EDD, 2009

* The unemployment numbers and rates for CDPs are included in the Placer County totals.

4.12.3 Impacts

Significance Criteria

Determination of impacts was derived from Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines. Impacts to population and/or housing will be considered potentially significant if they:

- Induce substantial population growth
- Displace a substantial number of housing units
- Displace a substantial number of people

Question 4.12a – Population Growth

Construction – Less-than-Significant Impact

SPPCo does not anticipate hiring personnel from local sources as construction of this type of project requires specialized skills and equipment not typically found in contractors based in the Lake Tahoe area. Crew members will likely commute from outside of the project area or reside temporarily at local lodging establishments. While the area population may increase temporarily during the construction phase, the project will not cause a permanent increase in population. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

In addition, the purpose of the project is to increase system reliability and accommodate known power demands in SPPCo's service territory. Furthermore, the project involves an upgrade of SPPCo's existing transmission system that currently serves the north Lake Tahoe area and surrounding communities, such as the Town of Truckee. There are no new extensions of service to new communities, either inside or outside of the Lake Tahoe Basin. Therefore, the project will enhance the system's reliability and capacity, and will not induce population growth in the area.

Operation and Maintenance – No Impact

Operation and maintenance activities for the project will be performed by current SPPCo personnel; no new jobs will be created. As a result, the project will not induce population growth directly or indirectly. Therefore, no impact will occur.

Question 4.12b – Displacement of Existing Housing – No Impact

The project includes upgrading and decommissioning existing transmission lines, substations, and switching stations. The majority of the transmission line removal and construction will occur in unpopulated or sparsely populated areas, on federal land, and within SPPCo's existing right-of-way (ROW). There are no housing units located within the existing ROW, or within any of the ROW that will be improved for the 650 Line or acquired for the new 625 Line. All substation modifications will occur within existing fenced areas or on SPPCo-owned parcels; no additional property will be acquired. A temporary workspace adjacent to the Tahoe City Substation will be required during construction for the placement of temporary transformers. This workspace is located on U.S. Forest Service land; however, there are no residences or other occupied buildings on this parcel. Therefore, existing housing will not be displaced and no impact will occur.

Transmission line and substation operation and maintenance practices include regular inspections, repair work, and vegetation removal activities. Because there are no housing units located within the new or existing transmission line ROW or on substation property, regular operation and maintenance practices of the proposed facilities will not displace housing. Therefore, there will be no impact.

Question 4.12c – Displacement of People – No Impact

The project will be constructed, operated, and maintained in mostly rural, sparsely populated areas and on easements and land that SPPCo either currently owns, will acquire, or will obtain permission to use for this purpose. In addition, construction, operation, and maintenance of the facilities will not displace existing housing units, as discussed previously in response to Question 4.12b. Therefore, people will not be displaced as a result of the project and no impact will occur.

4.12.4 Applicant-Proposed Measures

There will be no significant impacts to population and housing as a result of the project; therefore, no avoidance or minimization measures are proposed.

4.12.5 References

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