ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation is Incorporated" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials	☐ Public Services
☐ Agricultural Resources	☒ Hydrology/Water Quality	☐ Recreation
☒ Air Quality	☐ Land Use and Planning	☐ Transportation/ Traffic
☐ Biological Resources	☐ Mineral Resources	☐ Utilities & Service Systems
☒ Cultural Resources	☐ Noise	☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance
☐ Geology and Soils	☐ Population and Housing	

DETERMINATION

On the basis on this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the Proposed Project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ I find that although the Proposed Project could have significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measures described on an attached sheet have been added to the project. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that the Proposed Project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the Proposed Project MAY have a significant effect(s) on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets, if the effect is a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated." An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but must analyze only the effect that remains to be addressed.

☐ I find that, although the Proposed Project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will NOT be a significant effect in this case because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the Proposed Project, nothing further is required.

K. T. Coughlan

Kevin Coughlan, Program Manager
Energy Division, California Public Utilities Commission

July 7, 2004
Date

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4.1 AESTHETICS. Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.1.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Impacts would be considered significant if the project would substantially alter the visual character of the site or existing scenic resources (e.g., trees, earth formations, or buildings), especially if the alterations are visible from a state scenic highway.

The project could also have a significant impact if it created a new light source that has a substantial negative affect on views from surrounding areas.

It should be noted that upon review of the Proposed Project on March 25, 2004, the Nevada County Planning Commission indicated the following in regards to Aesthetics:

> *"...the design of this project ... is compatible with its surroundings and therefore meets the intent of the electrical substation design standards; because of the natural screening and landscaping provided by area vegetation, the low profile design, slatted fencing and additional landscaping are not required."*

4.1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project site is within an existing power line utility corridor. Pine trees are the dominant natural feature in the area and power lines from the north, south and west (connecting at the substation) are the dominant manmade feature. There are no state scenic highways in the project vicinity. No homes or structures are visible from the site. **Photos 4.1-1** through **4.1-4** show the existing character of the site.

Photos 4.1-1 and **4.1-2** show the existing substation. The area has mid-sized pine trees and ground shrubs in the undergrowth. The area is mainly green and golden/brown in the summer and green and white in the winter. Natural brown colored power poles are in close proximity to the existing substation that is surrounded by a chain link fence.

Photo 4.1-3 shows the existing view of transmission lines in the immediate area of the proposed substation site. The existing transmission line on the left is not related to the project. The substation taps the transmission line on the right and a new line continues west from the substation to the Hobart mills area.

Photo 4.1-4 shows the area of the proposed expansion. This area is has minimal trees and medium-dense ground cover. The proposed site is adjacent to the existing substation.

4.1.3 DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

a) ***No Impact***. The site is near public land, but there are no designated scenic vistas near the site. The Proposed Project would replace an existing substation with a new, modified substation, approximately twice as large as the existing substation. The substation would be larger but would retain similar visual qualities to the existing site. The graveled substation area within the chain-link fence would be approximately five times as large as the existing substation footprint. The new substation would have a maximum height of 42 feet; most of the bulk of the new substation would be less than 30 feet in height. Existing pine trees would shield the expanded site from distant views. The project would have minimal impact on any views from public lands and public roadways.

b) & c)

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project is not within view of a state designated scenic highway. There are limited views of the site from Dog Valley Road and Old Reno Road. Although there are limited views of the project site from off-site, the site would be more visible from surrounding unpaved county roads, but the overall visual quality of the site from the roads would not be degraded substantially.

The project is in a very scenic area adjacent to the National Forest, but the expansion area for the substation has no unusual scenic qualities. The substation would be larger but would retain similar visual qualities to the existing site. The project would need to remove three trees along with the existing vegetation, stumps, and logs on the site. The trees that would be removed do not contribute substantially to the visual quality of the area.

d) ***No Impact***. The project would not include any lights or light-reflecting materials. Therefore, there would be no impact from light or glare.

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Photo 4.1-1 page 1

Photo 4.1-1 page 2

Photo 4.1-2 page 1

Photo4.1- 2 page 2

Photo 4.1-3 page 1

Photo 4.1-3 page 2

Photo 4.1-4 page 1

Photo 4.1-4 page 2

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4.2 **AGRICULTURE RESOURCES.** In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997), prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☒	☐

4.2.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Significance is based on current and historical land use in regard to agricultural operations as well as soil classifications to determine farmland importance. If the project area were classified as significant farmland, was contracted under the Williamson Act, or was located near other agricultural operations, it would have potential agricultural impacts.

4.2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Agricultural resources of timber and soils, which support orchards and grazing, are abundant in Nevada County. The timber resources are primarily located on Tahoe and Toiyabe National Forest lands which accounted for 28 percent of Nevada County's land area in 1995 when the County General Plan was prepared. The subject site is dominated with Jeffrey pine with ground cover consisting mostly of mountain sagebrush and associated species. Due to the large number of tree stumps in the area, the site and surrounding parcels, it is possible that the area was once used for timber extraction. However, no timber harvesting or agricultural activities currently exist on site.

4.2.3 DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

a) ***No Impact***. The project site is not located on lands designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance.

b) ***Less than Significant Impact***. The easement site is located on private property zoned TPZ. However, the existing substation was constructed during the 1960's prior to the land being zoned for timberland production. As stated previously, the site is currently used as an electrical substation and does not include agricultural activities. The project is not under Williamson Act contract.

c) ***Less than Significant Impact***. Conversion of farmland typically results from placement of urban land uses in close proximity to active farmland. The purpose of the Proposed Project would be to upgrade the existing substation with modern electrical equipment and provide standard three-phase electrical service to an existing customer in the Hobart Mills area. The project site does not contain farmlands and the Proposed Project would be considered compatible with the existing use of the surrounding property of the adjacent National Forest.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4.3 AIR QUALITY. Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) 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 (including releasing emissions that exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

4.3.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District has developed thresholds of significance for projects. Three threshold levels are identified, each level having a corresponding requirement for mitigation:

a) The Level A thresholds (less than 25 pounds per day for ozone precursors or 80 pounds per day for PM_{10}), requires only standard mitigation measures applicable to all projects.

b) The Level B thresholds (greater than 25 pounds per day of ozone precursors or 80 pounds per day for PM_{10}) requires additional mitigation.

c) The Level C threshold (137 pounds per day for ozone precursors or PM_{10}) requires the use of all feasible and reasonable mitigation strategies. Unmitigated emissions above 137 pounds per day are considered to represent a significant adverse impact.

It should be noted that under the federal Clean Air Act, eastern Nevada County is considered "Unclassified" or "Attainment" for all pollutants. For the state standards, eastern Nevada County is "Non-Attainment" for PM_{10} and either "Attainment" or "Unclassified" for other pollutants.

4.3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

AIR BASIN

The project is within the Mountain Counties Air Basin and is within the jurisdiction of the NSAQMD. The area has a Mediterranean climate type, with pronounced summer and winter seasonal

variation in temperature and precipitation. Most precipitation occurs from late October through early May with winter precipitation falling as snow. Temperature variation is relatively high seasonal, as well as daily.

The project site is just east of the crest of the Sierra Nevada range within the Little Truckee River drainage. The prevailing wind direction is westerly, and the area has generally good ventilation characteristics. Westerly winds can transport pollutants into the area from the Sacramento Valley Air Basin.

AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS

Both the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) have established ambient air quality standards for common pollutants. These ambient air quality standards are levels of contaminants which represent safe levels that avoid specific adverse health effects associated with each pollutant. The ambient air quality standards cover what are called "criteria" pollutants because the health and other effects of each pollutant are described in criteria documents.

The federal and California state ambient air quality standards are summarized in **AQ Table 1** for important pollutants. The federal and state ambient standards were developed independently with differing purposes and methods, although both processes attempted to avoid health-related effects. As a result, the federal and state standards differ in some cases. In general, the California state standards are more stringent. This is particularly true for ozone and PM_{10}.

AMBIENT AIR QUALITY

The NSAQMD maintains ambient air quality monitoring stations in Nevada County. The closest monitoring site to the project site is in Truckee, about 5 miles south of the project site. Ozone and $PM_{2.5}$ are currently monitored at the Truckee-Fire Station site and PM_{10} was monitored at this site prior to 2001. PM_{10} was also monitored in the Glenshire subdivision prior to 2001. In the five year period 1999-2003, there were no recorded instances of exceeding the national or state standards for ozone. The highest 1-hour concentration during this period was 0.091 ppm, and the highest 8-hour average concentration was 0.077 ppm. (CARB, 2004)

Sampling of $PM_{2.5}$ began in the first quarter of 1999, and one instance of exceeding s the federal standards for this pollutant was recorded during the period 1999-2003. The maximum 24-hour concentration measured during this period was 120 ug/m^3, and the maximum annual average concentration was 9.4 ug/m^3. (CARB, 2004).

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The local air quality agency is the NSAQMD. The NSAQMD is comprised of three contiguous, mountainous, rural counties in northeastern California (Nevada, Sierra and Plumas counties). The NSAQMD is part of the Mountain Counties Air Basin. The District enforces controls on stationary sources of air pollutants through its permit and inspection programs and regulates open burning. Through its permitting powers, the District enforces limitations for emission of criteria and toxic air contaminants. Other District responsibilities include monitoring air quality, preparing of clean air plans and responding to citizen air quality complaints.

Both the federal and state governments have enacted laws mandating the identification of areas not meeting the ambient air quality standards and development of regional air quality plans to eventually attain the standards. Under the federal Clean Air Act, eastern Nevada

County is considered "Unclassified" or "Attainment" for all pollutants. For the state standards, eastern Nevada County is "Non-Attainment" for PM_{10} and either "Attainment" or "Unclassified" for other pollutants.

AQ TABLE 1
FEDERAL AND STATE AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS

Pollutant	Averaging Time	Federal Primary Standard	State Standard
Ozone	1-Hour 8-Hour	0.12 PPM 0.08 PPM	0.09 PPM --
Carbon Monoxide	8-Hour 1-Hour	9.0 PPM 35.0 PPM	9.0 PPM 20.0 PPM
Nitrogen Dioxide	Annual 1-Hour	0.05 PPM --	-- 0.25 PPM
Sulfur Dioxide	Annual 24-Hour 1-Hour	0.03 PPM 0.14 PPM --	-- 0.05 PPM 0.5 PPM
PM_{10}	Annual 24-Hour	50 g/m^3 150 g/m^3	20 ug/m^3 50 ug/m^3
$PM_{2.5}$	Annual 24-Hour	15 g/m^3 65 g/m^3	12 ug/m^3 --
Lead	30-Day Avg. Month Avg.	-- 1.5 g/m^3	1.5 ug/m^3 --

PPM = Parts Per Million
ug/m^3 = Micrograms Per Cubic Meter
eastern Nevada County is "Non-Attainment" for PM_{10} and either "Attainment" or "Unclassified" for other pollutants.

4.3.3 DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

a) ***No Impact***. The project is in an area that does not have a regional air quality plan required by either the federal or state Clean Air Acts.

b) ***Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated***. Construction activities such as excavation and grading operations, construction vehicle traffic and wind blowing over exposed earth would generate exhaust emissions and fugitive particulate matter emissions that would affect local and regional air quality. Project construction is expected to be completed within two months, with heavy equipment operating for approximately 5 to 10 workdays only.

AQ Table 2 shows anticipated worst-case daily construction emissions. These emission estimates are based on the use of a grader, front-end loader, crane, forklift compactor and trencher at the site under the worst-case assumption that each piece of equipment operates 8 hours. PM_{10} emissions include both exhaust emissions and fugitive dust. Fugitive dust was estimated using the U.S.E.P.A.'s construction emission factor of 1.2 tons per acre per month. In the absence of emission controls and mitigation measures, these emissions would exceed the NSAQMD's Level A significance thresholds. Standard

mitigation measures will therefore be required.

AQ TABLE 2
CONSTRUCTION EMISSIONS (POUNDS PER DAY)

	ROG	NOx	PM_{10}
Project Emissions	3.6	21.9	8.9 --
NSAQMD Level A Thresholds	Less than 25.0	Less than 25.0	Less than 80
NSAQMD Level B Thresholds	25 .0	25.0	80.0
NSAQMD Level C Thresholds	137.0	137.0	137.0

Mitigation Measures

MM AQ-1: Place dust control mitigation requirements in all construction contracts. All construction contracts will require the following:

- All construction activities shall be subject to the requirements of the Northern Sierra AQMD's Regulation 2, Rule 226 regarding dust control. The purpose of Regulation 2, Rule 226, is to reduce and control fugitive dust emissions to the atmosphere. For more information, see the following website:

  <http://www.arb.ca.gov/DRDB/NSI/CURHTML/R226.HTM>

- Alternatives to open burning of vegetative material on the project site shall be used unless deemed infeasible by the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District. Suitable alternatives are chipping, mulching, or conversion to biomass fuel.

- Contractors shall be responsible for ensuring that adequate dust control measures are implemented in a timely manner during all phases of project development and construction.

- All material excavated, stockpiled, or graded shall be sufficiently watered, treated, or covered to prevent fugitive dust from leaving the property boundaries and causing a public nuisance or violation of an ambient air standard. Watering should occur at least twice daily, with complete site coverage.

- All areas (including unpaved roads) with vehicle traffic shall be watered or have a dust palliative applied as necessary for stabilization of dust emissions.

- All on-site vehicle traffic shall be limited to a speed of 15 mph on unpaved roads.

- All land clearing, grading, earth moving or excavation activities shall be suspended as necessary to prevent excessive windblown dust when winds are expected to exceed 20 mph.

- All material transported off-site shall be either sufficiently watered or securely covered to prevent public nuisance.

- Re-establish ground cover on the site through seeding and watering in accordance with the local grading ordinance.

- Contractor shall be responsible for proper maintenance of all mobile and stationary equipment in order to minimize exhaust emissions.

Timing/Implementation: *This measure shall be implemented at all times during the operation phase of the project by the Applicant*

Enforcement/Monitoring: *Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District, California Public Utilities Commission*

The above measures would substantially reduce construction-phase emissions. This impact, after mitigation, would be less than significant.

c) ***No Impact.*** There would be no increase in emissions associated with operation of the project.

d) ***No Impact.*** There are no sensitive receptors in the immediate vicinity of the project site.

e) ***Less than Significant Impact.*** During construction the various diesel-powered vehicles and equipment in use on the site would create odors. These odors are temporary and not likely to be noticeable beyond the project boundaries. The potential for diesel odors impacts is less than significant.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands, as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal wetlands, etc.), through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.4.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Impacts to biological resources would be considered significant if the project would result in one or more of the following:

- An adverse impact to special status species, riparian habitats, or other sensitive natural community as listed in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or their habitats.
- An adverse effect on federally protected wetlands.
- Interference with the movement of resident or migratory fish and wildlife species or the use of wildlife nursery sites.

- Conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, including a Habitat Conservation Plan or Natural Community Conservation Plan.

4.4.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project is located in an area exhibiting two vegetation association types. The project site is dominated by sparse second growth Jeffrey pine (*Pinus jeffreyi*) with groundcover consisting mainly of mountain sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata ssp. vaseyana*) and associated species. The area surrounding the project site is a matrix of open scrub and forest. Evidence of past logging activities are present within the project area in the form of stumps and decayed logs. The site has a moderate slope draining to the south where a shallow ephemeral drainage is present approximately 100 meters (328 feet) south of the project area. Lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) is present along the margins of this drainage. Elevation of the project area is approximately 5,900 feet. The semi-arid climate of the area is typical for high mountain valleys in an alpine setting, cold wet winters with warm dry summers.

The two vegetation communities present in the project area are Sagebrush Scrub and Jeffrey Pine Forest (nomenclature follows Holland 1986). The Sagebrush Scrub contains moderately tall (approximately 1 meter) mountain sagebrush as well as a large component of bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*). These dominant shrubs are spaced such that several grass species (*Stipa, spp.*) were observed growing between the shrubs as well as mahala mat (*Ceanothus prostratus*), which is often associated with Jeffrey Pine Forest. The Sagebrush Scrub community provides the understory vegetation for the surrounding Jeffrey Pine Forest. Other tree species that were observed were Lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) as well as western juniper (*Juniperus occidentalis*). These two vegetation associations are consistent with the following habitat types: Sagebrush/Bitterbrush and Jeffrey Pine (nomenclature follows Mayer and Laudenslayer 1988).

4.4.3 DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

a) ***Less Than Significant Impact***. As stated in the California Department of Fish and Game *Loyalton-Truckee Deer Herd Management Plan,* dated May 1982, the main forage plants for the mule deer, *Odocoileus hemionus*, are bitterbrush, mahala mat, sagebrush and greenleaf manzanita. The Proposed Project would clear an area approximately 60 feet wide by 75 feet long. Mountain sagebrush and bitterbrush are the predominant plant species in the area proposed for permanent clearing and grading. A much higher quality foraging habitat is associated with a seasonal drainage approximately one mile southwest of the project site. Larger stands of bitterbrush, mahala mat, sagebrush and greenleaf manzanita are found in this seasonal drainage. The drainage also serves as a minor migration corridor for the mule deer. It is highly unlikely that the Proposed Project area would serve as a significant foraging area either during summer migration activities or winter foraging. The loss of 4,500 square feet of low value deer foraging habitat is therefore considered less than significant. No other wildlife species are expected to be displaced due to clearing or grading activities. The three soft-wood trees marked for removal were evaluated for the presence of nesting raptors. The trees do not support nests, and their removal would be considered less than significant. Studies conducted by Parsons Biologists during the summer of 2003 did not reveal the presence of special status plant or wildlife species or the specific micro-habitat to support such species. PMC has verified the adequacy of the Parsons study and visited the Proposed Project site on May 20, 2004. For the above reasons, this project will have a less than significant impact on biological resources.

b) ***No Impact***. The project would not have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies or regulations, nor on any habitats identified by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Therefore, there is no impact.

c) ***No Impact.*** The project site would not have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands, as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal wetlands, etc.), through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption or other means. Therefore, there is no impact.

d) ***No Impact***. The project would not interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites. Therefore, there is no impact.

e) ***No Impact.*** The project site would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance. Therefore, there is no impact.

f) ***No Impact.*** The project site would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan. Therefore, there is no impact.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES. Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in " 15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to " 15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geological feature?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☒	☐	☐

4.5.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

CEQA, at Public Resources Code 21083.2, requires planning agencies to determine if a project may have a significant effect on archaeological resources. Following CEQA guidelines in Section 15064.5 an "historical resource" includes:

1) A resource listed in, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources.

2) A resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code, or identified as significant in an historical resource survey meeting the requirements in Section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code shall be presumed to be historically or culturally significant. Public agencies must treat any such resource as significant unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant.

3) Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California may be considered to be an historical resource, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record. Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be "historically significant" if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources.

Public Resources Code 5024.1 presents criteria for determining the eligibility of a cultural resource for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). These criteria consider whether the project:

1) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;

2) Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;

3) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual or possesses high artistic value; or

4) Has yielded, or may yield, information important in prehistory or history.

CEQA also requires planning agencies to consider the effects of a project on unique archaeological resources. If an archaeological artifact, object, or site meets the definition of a unique archaeological resource, then the artifact, object, or site must be treated in accordance with the special provisions for such resources as presented at Public Resources Code 21083.2(e). Public Resources Code 21083.2(g) defines a unique archaeological resource as an archaeological artifact, object, or site that:

1) contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information; or

2) has a special and particular quality, such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type; or

3) is associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic person or event.

CEQA, at Section15064.5, defines a significant effect as one that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource. A "substantial adverse change" means physical demolition, destruction, relocation or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historical resource is materially impaired. The Lead Agency shall identify potentially feasible mitigation measures to mitigate significant adverse changes in the significance of an historical resource.

4.5.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

PREHISTORY

Fifty years ago Heizer and Elsasser (1953) initiated a program of organized research in the north-central Sierra Nevada. Their work identified and defined two archaeological *complexes*, the Martis Complex and the Kings Beach Complex. The "type sites" for these archaeological *complexes* are, respectively, CA-Pla-5 and CA-Pla-9. CA-Pla-5 is located near Truckee and CA-Pla-9 is located along the north shore of Lake Tahoe. The pioneering work of Heizer and Elsasser was followed by the substantive research of Elsasser (1960; Elsasser and Gortner, 1991) and Elston (1971; 1982; and Elston et al, 1977; 1994; 1995), who attempted to refine the set of characteristics that define the Martis Complex and Kings Beach Complex and establish their chronological and geographical limits. The current project is located in the "heartland" of both the Martis and Kings Beach Complex. The Kings Beach Complex is commonly divided into two periods: Early Kings Beach (1,300-700 B.P.), characterized by Rosegate Series points; and Late Kings Beach (700-150 B.P.), characterized by Desert Series Points (Elston, 1971; Drews, 1986; Zeier and Elston, 1986). Early Kings Beach is thought to represent the initial phase of the Washoe ethnographic pattern.

ETHNOGRAPHY

Prior to the arrival of Euroamericans in the region, California was inhabited by groups of Native Americans speaking more than 100 different languages and occupying a variety of ecological

settings. Washoe occupied the area surrounding Lake Tahoe and historically inhabited the region east of the crest of the Sierra Nevada into Carson Valley, extending from the Walker River in the south to Honey Lake in the north, with peripheral territory extending to the mid-elevations of the west Sierran slope (d'Azevedo, 1986). Washoe fully exploited their territory by following a pattern of seasonal transhumance, acquiring different resources across a range of altitudes and environments. Washoe lifeways are most completely described by Downs (1966); d'Azevedo's (1986) summary description of Washoe; Littlejohn's (1928) *Nisenan Geography*; Powers' (1876) *Life and Culture of the Washo and Paiutes*; Barrett's (1917) *The Washo Indians*; Siskin's (1938) *Washo Territory*; Lowie's (1939) *Ethnographic Notes on the Washo*; and d'Azevedo's (1963) *The Washo Indians of California and Nevada*.

Contemporary Washoe continue to inhabit the area and are very interested in preserving their traditional culture and protecting their traditional cultural properties. Indeed, Washoe have developed a Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Washoe Tribal Council, 1994), which addresses these issues. The Plan includes establishing a tribal and political presence across their traditional lands and revitalizing Washoe cultural heritage.

HISTORIC PERIOD

Spanish exploration of the Central Valley did not begin until the late 1700s, and the eastern edges of the Central Valley and the Sierra Nevada were not explored until the early 1800s. In 1808, Gabriel Moraga explored along the Mokelumne, Cosumnes, and American Rivers, passing near modern day Folsom (Beck and Haase, 1974). Subsequent exploration of the area in which the project is located is credited to mountain men such as Jedediah Smith, who crossed the Sierra Nevada into California in 1826 (Beck and Haase, 1974). Smith traveled along the American, Sacramento, and Cosumnes Rivers, and also probably passed through current Pleasant Valley (Brooks, 1977). Other explorers, such as Ewing Young, Joseph Walker, John Fremont, and Christopher "Kit" Carson soon followed Smith. Indeed, in 1844 Fremont crossed the Sierra Nevada near Lake Tahoe and descended the west slope in proximity to the American River, which he eventually followed to Sutter's Fort. Many of the trails, however, used by these early explorers and subsequent immigrants were not newly discovered routes, but rather Native American trails that were already in use.

Early explorations of the Sierra Nevada and its flanks were soon followed by groups of Euroamerican immigrants moving west. The first of these immigrant groups was the Bartleson-Bidwell party that crossed the Sierra Nevada in 1841 and followed the Stanislaus River into the Central Valley (Beck and Haase, 1974). The Joseph Chiles and Joseph Walker parties followed the crossing of the Sierra Nevada by the Bartleson-Bidwell party in 1843 (Beck and Haase, 1974). Chiles crossed the Sierra Nevada following the Malheur and Pit Rivers into the Central Valley, and then traveled south along the Sacramento River. Walker, on the contrary, traveled south along the eastern front of the Sierra Nevada to Walker Lake, where he crossed into Owens Valley, and eventually the Central Valley using what is now known as Walker's Pass. Subsequently, in 1844 the Stevens-Murphy party crossed the Sierra Nevada and probably is the first immigrant group to enter California via the Truckee and Bear Rivers. The route followed by this group became known as the California Trail, and it became a popular trail into California during the Gold Rush. The successful crossing of the mountains by the Stevens-Murphy party, however, is followed by the 1846 disaster of the Donner Party. Regardless, the general route of the Stevens-Murphy Party is used for the alignments of the Dutch Flat and Donner Lake Wagon Road, the Central Pacific Railroad (CPR), the Lincoln/Victory/Old 40 Highway, and Interstate 80 across the Sierra Nevada.

Joseph Gray built a cabin near present day Truckee in 1863, and initiated settlement of the area. Gray's initial settlement of the area was soon followed by the construction of the Dutch Flat and Donner Lake Wagon Road (DF&DLWR)[1] and the CPR, which also began in 1863 (Elston et al, 1981). The construction of the railroad fostered development of the area and the settlement known as Gray's Station, which grew around Gray's original cabin. Gray's Station soon became Coburn's Station and eventually was renamed Truckee. The first trains reached Truckee from Sacramento in 1868, and the subsequent linking of the CPR and the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) in May 1869 completed the first transcontinental railroad. Completion of the transcontinental railroad further stimulated growth in Truckee, which became a service center for the CPR. The rail yard at Truckee included a huge stone roundhouse and other ancillary structures required to service locomotives and house train crews, while the depot and adjacent hotels in Truckee served train passengers. Rail access also stimulated local industries, such as the lumber industry, which now had access to new markets both in the east and west. Consequently, the economy of Truckee and the surrounding area prospered.

Logging has been and continues to be a large industry in the region. Logging, until relatively recently, provided jobs for many of the residents of the region. Logging initially exploited easily accessible stands of timber, but as these stands were exhausted to meet an increasing demand for timber, logging operations incorporated novel extractive techniques (e.g., steam powered equipment), and expanded into new areas further from transportation centers. The 1880s witnessed the introduction of new saws and axes, the replacement of animal teams for hauling logs with the steam donkey, the use of "skid roads" during logging operations, and the construction of flumes and logging railroads. The logging industry continued to flourish in the area until the 1930s and the onset of the Depression, which lessened the demand for lumber. Indeed, Hobart Mills[2] was established in 1896 to facilitate logging operations in the area (Earl 1997). The town is named after W.S. Hobart who had been involved in logging in the Lake Tahoe area from the 1860s through the 1930s. Hobart's logging/milling operation also included the Hobart Estate Railroad. The railroad was sold to the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1932, and in 1937 logging operations at Hobart Mills were terminated, primarily due to the depletion of stands of timber in the area (Earl 1997). The following year the town, including buildings and equipment, was sold to the Los Angeles Iron and Steel Company, who in turn sold the machinery as scrap metal. Subsequently, in 1939 a fire destroyed the remaining buildings and structures at Hobart Mills (Earl 1997).

4.5.3 DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

Archaeological investigations for the SPPCo. Hobart Substation Rebuild Project were conducted by cultural resources staff of PARSONS, and documented in the report entitled *Cultural Resources Technical Report for the SPPCo. Hobart Substation Rebuild Project, Hobart Mills, CA* (PARSONS 2003). The archaeological investigations included a records search at the North Central Information Center at California State University, Sacramento, a sacred lands search by the Native American Heritage Commission conducted in August 2002 and May 2004, Native American consultation conducted in August 2002 and May 2004, consultation with the Truckee-Donner Historical Society, and pedestrian surface survey of the Proposed Project APE. Archaeological investigations (i.e., record search, consultation, and pedestrian surface survey) were adequate to identify typical prehistoric and historic resources that would likely be present

[1] A group of Sacramento merchants, who would later become known as the "Big Four" of railroad fame, Charles Crocker, Leland Stanford, Mark Hopkins, and Collis P. Huntington, operated the DF&DLWR.

[2] The town was originally named Overton, its name was changed to Hobart in 1910, and it was renamed Hobart Mills in 1917.

in the project area. Archaeological investigations did not identify any cultural resources (e.g., prehistoric sites, historic sites, or isolated artifacts) within the boundaries for the Proposed Project and no comments, to date, have been received from the Native American community or the Truckee-Donner Historical Society regarding the project.

a) ***No Impact***. Archaeological investigations for the project did not identify any historical resources. Therefore, the project would not impact any historical resources.

b) ***Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated***. Archaeological investigations for the project did not identify any unique archaeological resources. There is a possibility, however, of unanticipated and accidental archaeological discoveries during ground-disturbing project-related activities. Any unanticipated and accidental archaeological discoveries during project implementation have the potential to affect unique archaeological resources. This is considered a potentially significant impact unless mitigated.

MM CR-1: If any prehistoric or historic artifacts, or other indications of archaeological resources are found once project construction is underway, all work in the immediate vicinity must stop and the County shall be immediately notified. An archaeologist meeting the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards in prehistoric or historical archaeology, as appropriate, shall be retained to evaluate the finds and recommend appropriate mitigation measures for the inadvertently discovered cultural resources.

Timing/Implementation: *As a condition of project approval, and implemented during site disturbance activities.*

Enforcement/Monitoring: *Nevada County Planning Department, California Public Utilities Commission.*

Implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-1 would reduce impacts on archaeological resources to a **less than significant** level.

c) ***Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated***. Pedestrian surface survey of the project APE and other research did not identify any evidence of paleontological resources. However, there is a possibility of unanticipated and accidental paleontological discoveries during ground-disturbing project-related activities. Unanticipated and accidental paleontological discoveries during project implementation have the potential to affect significant paleontological resources. Implementation of the Proposed Project could result in potential damage or destruction of undiscovered paleontological resources. This is considered a potentially significant impact unless mitigated.

MM CR-2: If any paleontological resources (i.e., fossils) are found once project construction is underway, all work in the immediate vicinity must stop and the County shall be immediately notified. A qualified paleontologist shall be retained to evaluate the finds and recommend appropriate mitigation measures for the inadvertently discovered paleontological resources.

Timing/Implementation: *As a condition of project approval, and implemented during site disturbance activities.*

Enforcement/Monitoring: *Nevada County Planning Department, California Public Utilities Commission.*

Implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-2 would reduce impacts on paleontological resources to a **less than significant** level.

d) ***Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated***. Archaeological investigations for the project did not identify any human remains or evidence to suggest that human remains may be present within the project APE. There is a possibility, however, of the unanticipated and accidental discovery of human remains during ground-disturbing project-related activities. This is considered a potentially significant impact unless mitigated.

MM CR-3: If human remains are discovered, all work must stop in the immediate vicinity of the find, and the County Coroner must be notified, according to Section 7050.5 of California's Health and Safety Code. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission, and the procedures outlined in §15064.5(d) and (e) shall be followed.

Timing/Implementation: *As a condition of project approval, and implemented during site disturbance activities.*

Enforcement/Monitoring: *Nevada County Planning Department, California Public Utilities Commission.*

Implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-3 would reduce impacts on human remains to a **less than significant** level.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4.6 GEOLOGY AND SOILS. Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury or death, involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.6.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Impacts are considered significant if the project is located on highly unstable soils that would cause the facility to fail and expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury or death. Significant impacts would also occur if the project were located on an active fault or within an area that could experience liquefaction and landslides. Other impacts that may be significant include substantial project-related onsite erosion and loss of top soil.

4.6.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The eastern portion of Nevada County, in which the project site is located, is identified as part of geologic substructure zone III – Mesozoic Jura-Tiras Metavolcanic and Mesozoic Granitic

Formations. According to the Soil Survey of the Tahoe National Forest Area, California prepared by the USDA Forest Service in January 2002 (USDA Forest Service, 2002), soils on the project site consist of the Aldi-Kyburz complex (ARE), which is a mix of the Aldi (55 percent) and Kyburz (30 percent) soil series.

Aldi soils have a zero to eight-inch surface layer of brown loam, with weak granular structure and is slightly acidic. Subsoils consist of eight to 18 inches of brown clay loam, with a moderate angular blocky structure and neutral pH. The substratum consists of 18 inches of weathered andesite. Available water capacity in Aldi soils ranges from very low to low and has slow to very slow permeability. These soils are well drained with a high erosion hazard; therefore surface runoff at medium to rapid rates may occur, depending on slope and topography. Depth to rock ranges from 10 to 20 inches. Since these soils do not retain water and have a shallow depth to bedrock, the potential for liquefaction and soil failure is low (USDA Forest Service, 2002).

Kyburz soils have a zero to six-inch surface layer of brown, gravelly sandy loam of moderate granular structure and with a slightly acid pH. The subsoil consists of six to 34 inches of reddish brown gravelly clay loam of moderate subangular blocky structure with a very strong acidic pH. The substratum is located at 34 inches and consists of weathered andesitic rock. Water availability is also low while permeability is moderately slow. Kyburz soils are well drained with a high erosion hazard, and runoff can range from slow to rapid. (USDA Forest Service, 2002)

The project site is located within Seismic Hazard Zone III, which is a high hazard area of major probable damage. It is also located between two historic faults: Dog Valley Fault and an unnamed fault. This unnamed fault is located adjacent to or close to the project site. Earthquakes within the 4.5 to 6.4 magnitude range have historically occurred in the greater area surrounding the project site, although none have occurred directly on the project site.

The Proposed Project is located within Landslide Activity Zone 2, which is considered low risk according to the Nevada County General Plan. Hillsides surround the area to the north, west, and south, but the hillsides are not of considerable slope or height and are distant.

4.6.3 DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

a) ***Less than Significant Impact.*** Although the project is located in an area of very high seismic activity, the expansion of the substation would not place persons or buildings at significant risk of damage or injury. No persons would reside at the facility, only accessing it for maintenance and occasional monitoring. The only structures on the site would be equipment boxes, poles, and fencing. Although the facilities could potentially be damaged during an earthquake, no persons or significant structures would be affected.

Landslide effects are minimal. The Proposed Project is located within Landslide Activity Zone 2, which is considered low risk according to the Nevada County General Plan. Although there are slopes and hillsides in the vicinity of the project, they are of a size, slope, and at a distance that should a landslide occur, would not cause significant damage to the substation. Since the soils do not retain water well and have a shallow depth to bedrock, the risk of liquefaction or ground failure is minimal. Loams do increase the risk of liquefaction, but given the lack of other risk characteristics in the soils, the hazards associated with liquefaction are low.

The rebuilt substation would be subject to risks at the same level as the existing facility, and no increase of this risk would occur. This impact is less than significant.

b) ***Less than Significant Impact.*** According to the Nevada County General Plan Environmental Inventory Erosion Hazard Map, the Proposed Project would be located in a low erosion hazard zone. The site is relatively flat with little slope. Although minor erosion may occur, significant erosion is not expected. The erosion hazard on these soils is high, but given the flat topography, scattered vegetation, and lack of water features on the site, soils experience little gravitational, wind, or water stress. Most erosion would be expected during storm events through water movements or as a result of movement on the access road, which loosens the soils. Gravel placed on the roadway and within the facility would help to catch and settle any loose soils during a storm event. Minor grading of roughly 60 square feet at a depth of less than five feet would occur where concrete footings are to be installed to support substation equipment and along the roadway; however, significant levels of topsoil would not be removed since the site is primarily flat. Loosened soils may fill existing gullies and tracks on the access road to provide a smooth surface. Since construction would occur outside the rainy period, water and wind erosion during construction would be minor. In addition, gravelling of the access road and within the fenced area of the substation would reduce erosion levels in the long-term. Although some minor effect to topsoil and erosion would occur, this impact is considered less than significant.

c) ***Less than Significant Impact.*** The soils on the project site (Aldi-Kyburz complex (ARE), which is a mix of the Aldi (55 percent) and Kyburz (30 percent) soil series) are stable and would be able to support the expanded substation. The existing substation has not exhibited any instability due to soil structure. Since the Proposed Project is a minor enlargement of the existing system and would result in only minor changes in topography, the equipment and construction activities would not exhibit pressures great enough to result in instability on or off the project site beyond the existing condition. The impact is less than significant.

d) ***Less than Significant Impact.*** Due to the low water retention levels and shallow depth to bedrock, the soils on the project site would not be significantly expansive. In addition, the concrete footings are pads placed on the ground to support the equipment and would not be affected by soil expansion to a level that would cause risk to equipment operation. Likewise, transmission poles and fence posts would not be affected by soils to a degree that would cause failure. This impact is considered to be less than significant.

e) ***No Impact.*** The project does not generate wastewater nor require any septic system installation.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4.7 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS. Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan area or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or a public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	☐	☐	☒	☐

4.7.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

A hazardous material impact is considered significant if the Proposed Project results in the improper handling transportation, and/or disposal of such materials or results in the release or spill of hazardous materials. In addition, a significant impact would occur if implementation of a project results in adverse human health or safety related impacts, interferes with airport operations, or conflicts with the policies of the Nevada County Emergency Action Plan. In addition, significant impacts may result if a project places structures in an area subject to wildland fire hazards, or conflicts with the United States Forest Service (USFS) requirements for property owners or structures located within the "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone."

4.7.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) protects residents from hazardous material wastes and maintains the Site Mitigation and Brownfields Reuse Program Database (Calsites). The Calsites database is a catalogue of sites with potential hazardous substance contamination. There are five properties in the project vicinity that are listed on the Calsites database, three in Grass Valley and two in Nevada City. The project site is not listed or associated with a hazardous materials release, cleanup, or remediation program. In addition, there are no private airstrips in the vicinity of the project and the nearest airport is the Tahoe-Truckee Airport, which is located more than eight miles from the project site. The project site is located in an area classified by the USFS as a "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone; however, past timber harvests have reduced the wildland fire fuel load on the project site and in the immediate vicinity. The roadways that provide access to the project site do not include unsafe design features, nor have there been numerous traffic accidents. Therefore, the potential for a hazardous related incident on these roadways is considered minimal.

4.7.3 DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

a) ***Less than Significant Impact.*** The project is an electrical substation, which uses non-toxic mineral oil for lubrication and cooling. The project would not require the routine use or transportation of hazardous materials for construction or operation. Small amounts of hazardous materials would be transported and used during construction of the project for construction-related equipment. All hazardous materials used during construction would be properly handled, transported off-site, and disposed at an appropriate handling facility. Given that no hazardous materials would be used or transported during the project's operation and only small amounts used during construction activities, which should be completed within two months, this impact is considered less than significant.

b) ***Less than Significant Impact.*** See a) above.

c) ***Less than Significant Impact.*** There are no existing schools within five miles of the project site. The Tahoe-Truckee Unified School District is in the process of constructing the Alder Creek Middle School, which will be located on Alder Creek Road. The proposed middle school site is less than ¼-mile west of SR 89, which will be used to access the site. However, no hazardous materials would be used during project operation and the school would not be opened until after completion of the project; therefore, less than significant impacts are anticipated.

d) ***No Impact.*** See a) above.

e) ***No Impact.*** The project site is not within the Comprehensive Land Use Planning (CLUP) area of the Tahoe-Truckee Airport, as the airport is located more than eight miles southeast of the project site. As such, the project would not result in adverse safety conditions at this facility or any other public use airport and no impacts are expected.

f) ***No Impact.*** There are no private airstrips in the vicinity of the site that would be affected by implementation of the project; therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

g) ***No Impact.*** Implementation of the project would include roadway modifications, which would actually improve emergency access. The project would not conflict with the goals, policies, or objectives of the Nevada County Emergency Action Plan (NCEAP) or

requirements of the USFS in "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone"; therefore, no impacts are expected.

h) ***Less than Significant Impact.*** The project site is located in an area designated by the USFS as a "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone; however, there are no residences or structures adjacent to the project site. The nearest residence is located approximately 500-yards northwest of the project site. The project would not require staffing or personnel for operational purposes; therefore, human fire related impacts would be eliminated and this impact is considered less than significant.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4.8 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY. Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☒	☐	☐
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	☒
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of a failure of a levee or dam?	☐	☐	☐	☒
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami or mudflow?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.8.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

An impact would be considered significant if it resulted in flooding in off-site areas that do not normally receive flood waters, or if it resulted in the placement of structures within an area of known flooding or results in damage due to project-related water hazards. An impact is also

considered significant if the direction and rate of runoff is altered in a manner that negatively affects other surrounding structures or diverts water from the existing drainage pattern. This includes adding run-off to the existing drainage system to a point in which the runoff cannot be contained within existing drainage systems. Significant impacts to water quality may occur if hazardous materials are incidentally or purposefully discharged into aquatic environments or if runoff results in soil erosion and associated sedimentation into receiving waters. Excessive use of groundwater supplies so that recharge cannot meet demand, or the installation of improvements that block the flow of groundwater for existing users are also considered significant impacts.

4.8.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

There are no waters of the U.S. or state within the project site and immediate site vicinity. In addition, no other surface waterways are located on the site. A manmade drainage pipe and channel are located east of the access road. Beyond the project footprint, there are seasonal streams southwest and northeast of the site. The seasonal stream to the southwest is approximately 1,500 feet (0.3 mile) from the project site, while the northeast stream is approximately 2,500 feet (0.5 mile) from the site. Other seasonal streams are located further north of the site. Prosser Creek Reservoir is located approximately 3,000 feet (0.6 mile) south of the site. The reservoir is fed by Prosser Creek southwest of the project site, and empties back into Prosser Creek southeast of the project site. The larger Stampede Reservoir is located roughly 4.5 miles north of the project site along with the Little Truckee River, Sagehen Creek, and Dry Creek. There are also a number of small springs in the area, notably Woodchoppers Spring 3,000 feet (0.6 mile) northeast of the project site.

The project site is located within flood zone "X", which means that it is not located within a flood inundation area and is outside the 500-year flood plain and is also listed as outside the State Flood Hazard Area according to FEMA.

During an above average moisture year, groundwater was detected on site at five feet below surface level.

4.8.3 DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

a) ***Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated.*** The construction of the project would require grading and compacting of the substation footprint. In addition, the existing bladed access road would be widened to 12 feet and surfaced with gravel. The entire substation would be covered by gravel and oil containment would be provided in the form of clay berms. The clay berms would be compacted to 90 percent in order to contain oil and facilitate clean-up in the event of a leak or spill. Foundations would be poured for new transformers, electrical equipment, and to secure fence posts. Following these activities, new oil filled electrical equipment would be installed and the current oil-filled substation equipment would be removed. The oil used in the equipment is a non-toxic mineral oil.

Operational pollutants are limited to the non-toxic mineral oil used in the electrical equipment. The containment that would occur due to the installation of the clay berms around the site would limit the potential contamination surface waters due to spills.

Stormwater pollutants may be present during various times during construction including concrete, curing compounds, wastewater from construction vehicle washing, water from dewatering activities, hydraulic oil/fluids, gasoline, diesel, antifreeze and coolants,

erosion related sedimentation, PCB- contaminated dielectric fluid, and non PCB-contaminated dielectric fluid. Release of these pollutants into the existing offsite waterways could result in a significant impact to water quality.

MM WQ-1: SPPCo. shall implement the Spill Prevention and Recovery Program as approved by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Permit 6T-003-004-30, see Appendix C) Elements of the plan limit the storage of hazardous materials, fuels and oils and fueling station for construction materials to no closer than 200 feet of any water feature. On site vehicles shall be monitored for leaks and all leaks shall be cleaned up in accordance to existing laws. Other elements of the plan include secondary containment for bulk storage units in excess of 55 gallons, and placement of 2 Spill Kits on site at all times for immediate containment and cleanup.

Timing/Implementation: *As a condition of project approval, and implemented during construction activities.*

Enforcement/Monitoring: *Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Public Utilities Commission.*

Implementation of the above mitigation measure will reduce construction-related water quality effects to a less than significant level.

b) ***No Impact***. The project would not result in releases of toxic materials or salts into the groundwater supply. The earthen clay berm would be compacted to 90 percent in order to slow penetration and spread of potential mineral oil leaks and allow for cleanup while reducing the risk of non-toxic oil entering groundwater resources. In addition, approximately 150 square feet of soil would be covered by cement footings. This coverage would not significantly hinder recharge of groundwater. The project does not propose to use any surface or groundwater for its operation; therefore, it would not affect groundwater quantities.

c) ***Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated.*** The site is currently relatively flat and does not contain any streams or waterways. The site would be graded to provide a single level surface. Grading at the substation site is estimated to result in 27 cubic yards of cut and fill and would maintain the existing drainage to the south. Since no alterations to waterways or site drainage would occur, no significant alterations to the drainage patterns would occur. Gravel placed on the roadway and within the facility would help to catch and settle any loose soils during a storm event. The artificial drainage that currently exists east of the access road would remain intact and would continue to deposit storm runoff into the depression southeast of the site. Since little impervious coverage would result from the project, the surface runoff rate will remain virtually unchanged and stormwaters would be retained and percolated on site. Sedimentation of receiving waters could occur during grading and construction. Project construction is expected to be completed within two months, with heavy equipment operating for approximately 5 to 10 workdays only. Storm events that occur prior to October 15 could result in erosion and sedimentation of receiving water bodies. This impact is potentially significant.

Implementation of the Spill Prevention and Recovery Program as noted in **MM WQ-1** above would reduce construction related water quality effects to a less than significant level.

d) ***Less than Significant Impact***. No drainage or steam system would be altered during project construction. Only 150 Square feet of additional cement pad would be added to the substation site. Surface runoff from this area would not significant increase local runoff and would not result in on or off site flooding. The existing depression south of the substation site ponds seasonally. Since area topography forms a drainage pattern to this feature, runoff from the substation would continue to collect in the seasonal depression.

e) ***Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated.*** The project would not create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems. See Impact Discussion (d) above. However, the project could provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff as noted in Impact Discussion (a) above. This impact is potentially significant.

Implementation of the Spill Prevention and Recovery Program as noted in **MM WQ-1** above would reduce construction related water quality effects to a less than significant level.

f) ***No Impact***. The project would not result in any other degradation of water quality than has already been discussed.

g) through j)

No Impact. The project does not include the construction of residences or other buildings that may be inhabited or used by people; therefore, the risk of loss of life or accident would not occur. The rebuild of the substation would not place homes at risk of flooding, nor would it block flood flows as no enclosures other than equipment would be located on the site. The location of the site would not be at risk of significant harm due to dam failure as Prosser Dam empties to the southeast. Although there are hills near the site, mudflows would not occur at a level to cause destruction or inundation of the facility due to the distance of the hills from the project site. The project site is not located near enough a body of water that would cause a seiche or tsunami to be inundated.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4.9 LAND USE AND PLANNING. Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.9.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

An impact would be considered significant if the project divided a community such that new infrastructure and services would be required and the community could no longer function as a whole. A significant impact would also occur if the project conflicted with any of the plans or policies contained in the Nevada County General Plan or Zoning Code, or the policies or regulations of any agency with jurisdiction over the project. A conflict with one or more policies is considered to be significant.

4.9.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

EXISTING USES AT PROJECT SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The project site is located northwest of the intersection of Old Reno Road and Dog Valley Road. The project site is part of a larger 203-acre property and currently contains the original substation and associated transmission and distribution lines. The substation was constructed prior to the current zoning taking effect and is, therefore, considered a legal non-conforming use. Open space and undeveloped forest areas surround the project site and one single-family dwelling is located to the northwest. The Tahoe National Forest is located to the north, west, and south of this larger property.

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATIONS AND ZONING OF THE PROJECT SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The Nevada General Plan and Zoning Map designate the site as Forest-160 (FOR-160) and TPZ-160, respectively. Properties north, west, and south of the subject site are designated FOR-640 and zoned FR-640. The property east of the site is designated FOR-160 and zoned TPZ-160.

The Forest General Plan land use designation is intended to provide for production and management (including timber harvesting and related operations) of timber resources, and compatible recreational and low density residential uses. Within the Forest designation, the minimum parcel size should be 40+ acres, in order to provide for preservation of the timber resources and protection of resource management needs and opportunities.

The Forest zoning district provides areas for the protection, production and management of timber, timber support uses, including but not limited to equipment storage and temporary offices low intensity recreational uses, and open space.

The TPZ zoning district provides for prudent and responsible forest resource management and the continued use of timberlands for the production of timber products and compatible uses. It is intended to be a district where the land is devoted to the growing and harvesting of timber and for such compatible uses that do not significantly detract from the use of the land for the growing and harvesting of timber. Land uses under the TPZ zoning district would be restricted to growing and harvesting timber and supporting and compatible uses for a period of ten years after rezoning. Such zoning allows land to be valued for property taxation, in general, on the basis of its use for growing and harvesting timber only.

4.9.3 DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

a) ***No Impact***. The project site is part of a larger 203-acre property containing primarily open space and forestlands. The site is surrounded by open space and forested areas and the nearest residence is approximately 1,900 feet northwest of the project site. No existing communities are located in the project vicinity.

b) ***Less than Significant Impact***. The CPUC is required to consider local land use regulations and policies when making decisions and must comply with local building, design, and safety standards to the greatest degree feasible to minimize project conflicts with local conditions. Therefore, the following analysis is provided to assist with determination of the project's consistency with the applicable land use plan, policies, and regulations.

The Nevada County Zoning Ordinance Section L-II 3.14.F.2, Electrical Lines and Electrical Substations, states that these uses are permitted subject to a use permit in all base districts except the R1, R2 and TPZ. The requested entitlements include an immediate rezone of a 13,750 square foot site from TPZ to Public (P). The Public zoning district allows for areas occupied by federal, state, and local government agencies, or by private entities under contract to provide services normally provided by government. The General Plan Land Use Designation Compatibility Matrix included in Policy 1.19 of the General Plan shows that the Public district is compatible with all land use designations except Open Space. Therefore, a General Plan Amendment for the Proposed Project would not be required.

Zoning Ordinance Section L-II 2.3 C.6.b allows for a landowner to request an immediate rezoning from a TPZ zone to a different zone, on all or part of a parcel. Consistent with the provisions of this section, on April 23, 3004, the County Board of Supervisors made a recommendation to the State Board of Forestry to approve an immediate rezone from TPZ-160 to Public. If the State Board of Forestry approves the conversion from TPZ, County staff will return to the Board of Supervisors to request actual approval of the rezone. This MND assumes that the project would comply with all applicable Board of Forestry requirements and Nevada County Zoning Regulations, including those pertaining to immediate rezoning of TPZ lands.

A Use Permit is required for the project by Zoning Ordinance Section L-II 3.14 F.2. This section details regulations for the design and location of electrical lines and electrical substations with the objective of effectively designing substations to be compatible with their surroundings. For the purpose of this environmental analysis, it is assumed that the project would comply with the provisions of Zoning Ordinance Section L-II 3.14 F.

With approval of the requested entitlements, the project would be consistent with the General Plan and zoning designations for the site. Further, the project would be consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan. Prior to substation site development, SPPCo. would submit project construction and grading plans to the Nevada County Planning Department and Nevada County Building Department for review and approval.

c) ***No Impact.*** The project site would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance. The project site would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan. Therefore, there is no impact.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4.10 MINERAL RESOURCES. Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.10.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

A mineral resource impact is considered significant if a project adversely affects a mineral resource deposit or inhibits the extraction of mineral resources considered valuable to the local economy or of regional importance.

4.10.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Nevada County has a wide variety of valuable mineral deposits and is home to recreational mining, mining exploration, surface mining and subsurface mining activities. The *California State Division of Mines and Geology* produces maps designating areas containing important or valuable mineral deposits as Mineral Resource Zones (MRZ), which are included in the Nevada County General Plan. There are no active mines in the project's immediate vicinity; however, there is an existing sand and gravel pit located approximately ½-mile south of the project site.

4.10.3 DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

a) ***No Impact.*** Implementation of the project would not result in the loss of valuable Nevada County or statewide mineral resources, as the project site is not located within a MRZ, as depicted on the *Mineral Classification Map.* In addition, the project would not interfere with mineral county extraction activities, as the nearest extraction area is a sand and gravel pit, located approximately ½-mile from the site. Therefore, no mineral resource impacts are anticipated.

b) ***No Impact.*** See a) above.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4.11 NOISE. Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance or of applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan area or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or a public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.11.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

CEQA Guidelines indicate that a project may be deemed to have a significant effect on the environment if it would substantially increase the ambient noise levels for adjoining areas. A change in noise levels of less than 3 dBA is not discernible to the general population; an increase in average noise levels of from 3 to 5 dBA is clearly discernible to most people (California Department of Transportation, 1991). An increase in the noise environment of 5 dBA or greater is considered to be the minimum required increase for a change in community reaction (U.S. Department of Transportation, 1990) and, for the purposes of this analysis, constitutes a significant noise impact. For temporary noise impacts, identification of "substantial increases" would depend on the duration of the impact, the temporal daily nature of the impact, as well as the absolute change in dBA levels.

The Nevada County Noise Ordinance designates a maximum noise limit of 75 decibels, within the Timberland Production Zone between the hours of 7am and 7pm. However, Noise Ordinance Section L-II-4.1.7.D.8 indicates that these limitations are not applicable during construction activities. A significant operational noise impact would occur if the project were to exceed the "normally acceptable" noise levels of existing land uses in the project area. If a land use already exists in a "conditionally acceptable" or "normally unacceptable" noise compatibility

environment, as designated in the General Plan, an increase in operational noise that would result in a change of land use compatibility category would be considered a significant noise impact. For land uses designated within a "clearly unacceptable" noise compatibility environment, operational noise that would result in a 3 dBA or greater increase to the existing noise environment would be considered significant if sensitive receptors were present that would be affected. If sensitive receptors would not be present, but the land use is considered sensitive to noise, then a 5-dBA increase would be considered significant.

NOISE TABLE 1
NEVADA COUNTY EXTERIOR NOISE LIMITS

Land Use Category	Zoning Districts	Time Period	Noise Level, dba	Noise Level dba
			Leq	Lmax
Rural	"A1" "TPZ" "AE" "OS" "FR" "IDR"	7 am – 7pm 7 pm – 10 pm 10 pm – 7 am	55 50 40	75 65 55
Residential and Public	"RA" "R2" "R1" "R3" "P"	7 am – 7pm 7 pm – 10 pm 10 pm – 7 am	55 50 45	75 65 60
Commercial and Recreation	"C1" "CH" "CS" "C2" "C3" "OP" "REC"	7 am – 7 pm 7 pm – 7am	70 65	90 75
Business Park	"BP"	7 am – 7 pm 7 pm – 7am	65 60	85 70
Industrial	"M1" "M2"	Any time	80	90

SENSITIVE RECEPTORS AND EXISTING NOISE SOURCES

Some land uses are considered more sensitive to ambient noise levels than others, due to the amount of noise exposure (in terms of both exposure duration and insulation from noise) and the types of activities typically involved. Residential areas, schools, and hospitals generally are more sensitive to noise than are commercial and industrial land uses.

4.11.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Proposed Project is located on private property at an existing substation site in an undeveloped area. A single homeowner resides within the vicinity of the Proposed Project, and the residence sits on a ridge overlooking the site. There is evidence that timber extraction activity previously occurred within the vicinity of the Proposed Project site, but these activities have ceased and the area is used primarily for recreation. Due to the primarily undeveloped nature of the project area, existing noise levels are generally low. Existing noise levels emanating from the substation are not significant, and more noise is generated accessing the site than during regular operation of the facility.

4.11.3 DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

a) ***Less than Significant Impact***. Construction and operation of the Proposed Project is not expected to result in significant noise increases. The project is located in an area currently designated as TPZ, and no residences or sensitive receptors are on or immediately adjacent to the project site. The nearest residential neighborhood is located approximately 1.5 miles north of the site and it is unlikely that peak construction noise or substation operation noise would be audible at that distance. The Zoning Code and General Plan do not limit noise levels during construction activities; therefore, the project would not conflict with the established noise standards of Nevada County. Construction activities would be temporary in nature and are considered less than significant. Operation of the Proposed Project is not expected to result in significant noise increases above current noise levels, and is also considered less than significant.

Current Best Management Practices, including but not limited to, notification of the property owner, proper maintenance of equipment, and the use of standard mufflers appropriate for each piece of equipment would reduce any disturbances caused by construction noise.

b) ***Less than Significant Impact.*** No excavation other than post-installation would occur; however, the site would be cleared and graded. The project does not involve large amounts of material to be removed from the site. Due to the sparsely populated nature of the area, there are few persons that could be affected by construction noise or vibration from construction equipment or trucks. Therefore, impacts from groundborne noise and vibration would be less than significant.

c) ***No Impact***. Operation of the Proposed Project is not expected to result in significant noise increases above current substation noise levels. Therefore, there is no impact.

d) ***Less than Significant Impact***. Project construction is expected to be completed within two months, with heavy equipment operating for approximately 5 to 10 workdays only. During the construction phase of the project and removal of the existing substation, construction equipment would generate noise above the existing levels. Grading, dumping, graveling and other activities would generate noise within the project area. At a distance of 1,000 feet (.19 mile) a maximum level of noise would be 52 decibels (Leq). Only in the case of all equipment being used simultaneously, decibel levels between 54 and 60 L_{eq} could be expected at the nearest public roadway, however this is not a substantial increase over the non-construction period allowable limit. Therefore, this would be a less than significant impact.

Current Best Management Practices, including but not limited to, notification of the property owner, proper maintenance of equipment, and the use of standard mufflers appropriate for each piece of equipment would prevent any disturbance caused by construction noise.

e) ***No Impact***. The project is not located within the vicinity of an airport.

f) ***No Impact***. The project is not located within two miles of a private airstrip.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4.12 POPULATION AND HOUSING. Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.12.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Impacts are measured by the number of people that may need new housing and the number of homes that would need to be replaced as a result of the project. Any increase in housing need or replacement would be considered significant.

4.12.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Hobart Mills area contains a small number of single-family residences. SPPCo. provides electrical power to these residences. Truckee Donner Public Utility District provides electrical power services to customers in the downtown Truckee area, Donner Lake, Tahoe Donner, Sierra Meadows, Prosser Heights, and Prosser Lakeview.

According to the U.S. Census, there were approximately 13,864 residents in the Town of Truckee in 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Current housing and development restrictions within the Truckee/Tahoe area coupled with high housing costs have created an affordable housing shortage within the area. The area is generally comprised of second homes and investment in affordable housing is unattractive because of high land values and recreation-oriented land uses.

4.12.3 DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

a) ***Less than Significant Impact.*** Construction of the Hobart Substation is proposed to replace the existing 60/12.5 kV substation equipment with newer more reliable equipment. The project does not propose to extend services from the substation to any new users, but instead will enable the substation to deliver the amount of load required by an existing customer for existing and future uses conditionally approved by Nevada County. These uses include a topsoil processing/materials recycling operation and a proposed future concrete batch plant. The Proposed Project would not result in the generation of additional population or residences, and no extension of services is planned beyond what is currently associated with the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project would not add to or cumulatively exceed regional or local population projections, nor would it induce substantial growth in an area either directly or indirectly.

b) ***No Impact.*** No housing would be displaced or otherwise affected by the Proposed Project.

c) ***No Impact.*** The Proposed Project is not a land use that would directly increase population within the community and would not result in significant impacts to population levels or housing opportunities.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4.13 PUBLIC SERVICES. Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:				
a) Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Police protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.13.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Public service impacts are considered significant if a project requires services and/or facilities, which exceed the current capacity of the providers of those services, or if implementation of the project results in the need for additional facilities or services. In addition, if public service provision for a project results in adverse physical environmental effects, the impact is considered significant.

4.13.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The United States Forest Service (USFS) provides the primary fire protection and emergency medical response service to the Proposed Project site. The Truckee Fire Protection District (TTFD) would serve in a support capacity to the USFS if additional fire protection or related services were required. The Nevada County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services to unincorporated portions of the County, including the Proposed Project site. The project site is located on private land and not within the Tahoe National Forest. All lands located within National Forest boundaries are subject to Federal Regulations published in Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations. The project is located within the boundaries of the Tahoe-Truckee Joint Unified School District (TTUSD). Currently, there are no public or private schools within five-miles of the project site. The TTUSD is in the process of constructing the Alder Creek Middle School, located near the intersection of Alder Drive and State Route 89, approximately four miles southwest of project site. In addition, the project site is located on private land surrounded by and adjacent to the Tahoe National Forest. The area offers several recreational opportunities including but not limited to camping, hiking, mountain biking, recreational mining, and boating.

4.13.3 DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

a) ***Less than Significant Impact.*** There are no fire related accidents or occurrences associated with the existing substation. The Proposed Project would rebuild the existing facility; however, would not include structures or other materials that would increase the on-site fuel load. The modifications to the access road would improve fire and

emergency response capabilities of the USFS and the TTFD, which provide fire protection to the proposed site; therefore, less than significant impacts are anticipated.

b) ***Less than Significant Impact.*** Implementation of the project would not increase the demand for law enforcement services or related facilities. Potential impacts could include vandalism or theft, requiring response from the Nevada County Sheriff's Department. However, the project would be surrounded by a locked, 8-foot chain-link fence topped with barbed wire, which would deter possible unlawful activities; therefore, less than significant impacts are expected.

c) ***No Impact.*** The Proposed Project does not include a residential component; therefore, the project would not generate additional students for the TTUSD or result in the need for expanded services or new facilities.

d) ***No impact.*** Implementation of the Proposed Project would not increase the use of existing parks, campgrounds, or other recreational facilities in the area. In addition, the project would not result in the need for new or expanded recreational facilities.

e) ***No impact.*** The project would not require additional public services than those discussed and evaluated above (See a through d); therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4.14 RECREATION. Would the project:				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Does the project include recreational facilities, or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.14.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The impacts are analyzed based on whether the project proposes to construct recreational facilities, cause an increase in use of recreational facilities, or result in development of a recreational area. If any of these actions were to occur and cause an adverse physical effect on the environment, the impacts would be considered significant.

4.14.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Tahoe National Forest covers approximately 169,000 acres and 264 square miles of land in Nevada County. The Toiyabe National Forest covers 2,600 acres in eastern Nevada County. The Spenceville Wildlife and Recreation Area contains 11,000 acres or 17 square miles, with half the tract in Nevada County and the other half in Yuba County. The Bureau of Land Management has some 11,000 acres of land in Nevada County. These areas cover a total of 294 square miles (or 30 percent) of the County's 978 square miles. Camping and other passive recreational opportunities within the County are provided by the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Army Corps of Engineers, State Parks and Recreation, the Nevada Irrigation District and the two parks and recreation districts, on public lands, and by the Pacific Gas and Electric company in conjunction with hydroelectric power facilities.

The project site is located near the Tahoe National Forest and several lakes and reservoirs, including the Prosser Creek, Boca, and Stampede reservoirs. Campsites and hiking trails are located near each of these reservoirs. The project site is on private land so that there are no recreational uses on the site and trespassing from unauthorized visitors is not allowed.

4.14.3 DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

a) ***No Impact.*** Due to the character of the proposed use (Utility), the project will not result in an increased use of existing parks or recreational facilities.

b) ***No Impact.*** See item (a) above. The project is the expansion and operation of an electrical substation and would not include recreational facilities or residential uses which would require the construction or expansion of such facilities.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4.15 TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC. Would the project:				
a) Cause an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume-to-capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4.15.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

A transportation impact is considered significant if it results in the exceedance of established Nevada County General Plan or Caltrans Level of Service (LOS) standards on any roadways potentially affected by a project. Parking, emergency access, and design feature impacts are considered significant if the project site does not provide adequate facilities for the construction and operational phases of a project, results in inadequate access for emergency service vehicles, or includes roadway modifications which are incompatible with existing uses or result in an increase in traffic related accidents. Alternative transportation (i.e., transit, pedestrian and equestrian paths and bicycle routes) impacts are less than significant if a project does not conflict with adopted Nevada County General Plan policies which seek to increase the availability of alternative transportation options. In addition, if a project falls within two miles of an active airport or airstrip or conflicts with policies of an airport's CLUP the impact is considered significant.

4.15.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project site is accessed regionally via Interstate 80, which is approximately eight-miles east of the project site. Interstate 80 is the primary east-west freeway facility in the area and serves as

the major transportation routed connecting the urban areas of the Bay Area and Sacramento to Lake Tahoe and Reno. SR 89 is a two-lane facility running from northwest to southeast, generally in the southeastern portion of the County. SR 89 is used mainly for localized traffic and tourists. Exiting SR 89, local access to the project site is via Old Highway 89, Dog Valley Road, Old Reno Road, Hobart Mills Road, and a privately owned and maintained dirt road. The Tahoe-Truckee Airport is located near the intersection of SR 267 and Schaffer Mill Road, more than eight miles southeast of the Proposed Project site. Southern Pacific (SP) owns and operates the only railway line in the County, which is located near Interstate 80. The line is generally used for the movement of goods but does provide limited passenger service to Roseville, Colfax, Reno and Sacramento. Due to the rural location and surroundings of the project site, available alternative transportation modes consist mostly of bike and equestrian trails and pedestrian and hiking paths.

4.15.3 DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

a) ***Less than Significant Impact.*** The project site is located within the "rural regions" designation in the Nevada County General Plan. Rural region roadways serve as access for designated Community Regions. Nevada County General Plan Transportation Policy 4.1 establishes a minimum acceptable LOS "C" for all rural regions in the County except on facilities where the current conditions exceed the LOS C standard. Temporary traffic increases would occur during the construction phase as materials and equipment are transported to the site. The project is anticipated to generate approximately 16 daily trips during the construction phase. Old Highway 89, Dog Valley Road, Old Reno Road, and Hobart Mills Road currently operate at a LOS A, which is characteristic of the majority of the roadways in the immediate vicinity. Project construction is expected to be completed within two months, with heavy equipment operating approximately 5 to 10 workdays only. The construction phase would generate approximately 80 vehicle trips per week (based on a five-day work week). Implementation of the project would not exceed established LOS standards or result in unacceptable operating conditions on affected roadways; therefore, this impact is considered less than significant.

b) ***Less than Significant Impact***. See response (a) above.

c) ***No Impact.*** The nearest airport in the vicinity is the Tahoe-Truckee Airport, located more than eight miles southeast of the project site. The project site is not located within the airport CLUP area and is therefore not subject to provisions of the CLUP. In addition, the project would not affect flight patterns or result in any air related safety impacts and no impacts are anticipated.

d) ***Less than Significant Impact.*** The project proposes roadway modifications, which would improve the existing "T" intersection at the access road to the project site and private road off of Hobart Mills Road. The private driveway would be improved to Nevada County Fire Safe Driveway standards from Dog Valley Road to the Proposed Project site. Potential incompatibilities include motorcyclists, bicyclists, hikers and project construction vehicles; however, due to the low volume of traffic generated by the project, this impact is considered less than significant.

e) ***Less than Significant Impact.*** See (d) above.

f) ***No Impact.*** The project would not require personnel for operation; therefore, no permanent parking facilities is required. During the construction phase, parking would be needed for vehicles, equipment and materials. The project site provides adequate area

for construction staging. In addition, the project would not need routine maintenance and would only be performed on as necessary basis. The project would not result in inadequate parking facilities and no impact would result.

g) ***No Impact.*** As indicated above, the project site is located in a rural area and no bus or transit services are available. Therefore, implementation of the project would not conflict with the Nevada County General Plan or other relevant policies promoting and encouraging alternative transportation mode opportunities; thus, no impacts are anticipated.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4.16 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS. Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Comply with federal, state and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

4.16.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Utility and service system impacts are considered significant if a project requires services that exceed the current or planned capacity of available water, wastewater service systems or results in adverse environmental impacts through the construction of new facilities and related infrastructure. Solid waste impacts are considered significant if a project exceeds the permitted capacity of an affected landfill or conflicts with state or local policies and standards regarding solid waste generation, handling, or disposal.

4.16.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Due to the rural location of the project site, public utility services are limited or not available. The project site is located outside the service area of the Truckee Donner Public Utility District (TDPUD); as such, there are no public water or wastewater systems in the area and all structures requiring utilities and homes are served by private wells and septic systems. Solid waste services are provided through contract with the Tahoe Truckee Sierra Disposal (TTSD), which serves the unincorporated portion of West Lake Tahoe Basin, including the project site, Meeks Bay, and Tahoma areas. Solid wastes are collected by the TTSD and hauled to the Eastern Regional Landfill and Transfer Station (ERLTS) near the Town of Truckee and Squaw Valley and ultimately

disposed of at the Lockwood Regional Landfill (LRL), which serves northeastern California and Nevada. No hazardous materials are accepted at either the ERLTS or the LRL. The TTSD sponsors customer drop-off hazardous material events twice a week from May through October. The hazardous wastes are collected at TTSD's main facility and transferred to a private hazardous waste handling firm in Placer County.

4.16.3 DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

a) ***No Impact.*** No wastewater would be generated through operation of the project. There would be no on-site personnel, other than for occasional maintenance or emergency repairs, so the project would not require personnel or restrooms. In addition, the project is a self-contained electrical substation; and would not generate wastewater. The project site is located within the boundaries of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (LRWQCB). Since no wastewater would be generated, it would not exceed or conflict with LRWQCB wastewater or water quality standards.

b) ***No Impact.*** See (a) above. In addition, no wastewater generation or disposal would be associated with the Proposed Project. Therefore no new treatment facilities or conveyance infrastructure would be required and no impacts are expected.

c) ***No Impact.*** As previously discussed, the structures and homes in the area obtain water from privately owned and operated groundwater wells. The proposed substation would be cooled by the use of non-toxic mineral oil. Non-potable water would only be required for dust control measures during the construction activities, not during project operation. No new or expanded entitlements would be necessary and no new water conveyance or storage infrastructure would be required.

d) ***No Impact.*** See (a) above.

e) ***Less than Significant Impact.*** Operation of the proposed substation would not result in solid waste generation. Construction and maintenance activities would generate small amounts of solid waste, which would be hauled away and ultimately disposed of at the Lockwood Regional Landfill, which has permitted capacity for the next 20 to 25 years.

f) ***No Impact.*** The project would comply with all federal, state, and local regulations regarding the transportation, handling and disposal of hazardous materials; therefore, no impact is anticipated.

g) ***No Impact.*** The project would comply with all federal, state, and local regulations regarding the handling and disposal of all hazardous materials and solid waste and no impacts are anticipated.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4.17 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE				
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of rare or endangered plants or animals, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☒	☐

a) *Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated.* Implementation of the project could result in adverse environmental impacts to air quality, known and unknown cultural and historic resources, and hydrology and water quality. A detailed analysis of these *potentially significant* impacts is addressed in the appropriate technical sections of this MND. Appropriate mitigation measures were identified to reduce these potentially significant impacts to less than significant levels. Mitigation measure MM AQ-1 in *Section 4.3 Air Quality,* would substantially reduce the emissions associated with the construction phase of the project and mitigation measures CR-1 through CR-3 in *Section 4.5 Cultural Resources,* would reduce cultural resource related impacts to a less than significant level. In addition, mitigation measure MM WQ-1 in *Section 4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality*, would reduce all construction related water quality impacts to a less than significant level. Implementation of the Mitigation Monitoring Program, included as Appendix A in this MND, would ensure that all potentially significant impacts are mitigated to *less than significant* levels.

b) *Less than Significant Impact.* As discussed in Section 3.0 of this MND, the project will incorporate mitigation measures to reduce the impacts associated with air quality, known and unknown cultural and historic resources, and hydrology and water quality to less than significant. Therefore, no cumulative impacts are anticipated as a result of the project. .

c) *Less than Significant Impact.* Potential project impacts such as air quality, hydrology/water quality, and known and unknown cultural and historic resources could cause substantial adverse effects in human beings, either directly or indirectly. However, the mitigation measures discussed in a) above would ensure that any adverse human health and safety related impacts are reduced to a *less than significant* level.