PROPONENTS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

SIERRA PACIFIC POWER COMPANY HOBART SUBSTATION REBUILD PROJECT

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PARSONS

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SECTION I – SUMMARY

Located east of Hobart Mills and north of Prosser Creek Reservoir, Sierra Pacific Power Company would rebuild the existing substation and replace it with a new, substation containing current equipment and technologies. The substation would continue to only provide services to existing customers in the Hobart Mills area. During the rebuild process, existing equipment would be removed and reused at other Sierra Pacific Power Company sites. The rebuild would expand the facility from 900 square feet to 4,500 square feet, primarily for internal accessibility improvement purposes. In addition, concrete footings would be installed under the equipment instead of the existing wood risers. Like the existing facility, the substation would be fenced and would include an earthen clay berm within the fenced area. Gravel would also be placed within the fenced area and the access road would be regraded, widened, and graveled for improved safety and four-season accessibility.

The Project would be located on private land and would be surrounded by open space or undeveloped areas with low vegetation and scattered second-growth trees. Although there are waterways in the greater vicinity, there are no water resources on the site, with the exception of the manmade drainage, which empties south of the project in an area of low laying topography. The site is adjacent to the Tahoe National Forest, operated by the US Forest Service, and is near the intersection of Dog Valley and Old Reno Roads. The site is zoned by Nevada County as Forest and Recreation with a Forest Preserve designation. No homes or structures are visible from the site, although a residence may overlook the sight from a nearby ridge. Due to the large number of tree stumps in the area, the site and surrounding parcels, it is assumed that the area was once used for timber extraction. A detailed project description is located in Section II, with a detailed Alternatives Analysis in Section III.

No other alternatives are being considered other than “no project”. Only the proposed site was selected because it is the intersection of both the transmission line (the source of power) and the distribution line, which currently goes to and serves customers. Any other location would require the construction of a lateral from either the transmission line, the distribution line or both, which would result in added costs and added environmental impact resulting from powerline construction. The proposed site also took into account the proximity to existing access, the relationship with the landowner of the existing substation, and the flat terrain, which minimizes the cost of site preparation and reduces environmental impacts.

This Proponents Environmental Assessment (PEA) evaluates potential environmental impacts that could result from the construction and operation of the project (see Section IV). As required by California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) guidelines, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Initial Study Checklist was used as the format for describing potential impacts. Impacts resulting from the project would occur during the construction process. No significant impacts would occur as a result of continued operation of the facility. Construction impacts would consist of ground

disturbance, potential for wildfire hazards, and design consistency. Since the project would continue to serve only existing customers, no increase in population or housing growth is expected, nor are services expanded into new, previously unserved areas of the community.

Mitigation is provided to reduce the effects of the identified impacts to a less than significant level. These mitigation measures are summarized in the following table:

Topic	Mitigation Measure
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	**Fire Prevention Measures:** As part of best management practices, the areas in which construction occurs shall be cleared of vegetation prior to construction activity. All construction areas shall be equipped with adequate fire suppression devices such as extinguishers and shovels, and all equipment shall be maintained to prevent accidental sparks. Construction safety precautions shall be listed and included in contract specifications. Trees and vegetation within the 9,375 square foot project area shall not be replaced and the area shall be kept clear during regular operation of the facility so that no trees may fall onto the substation and no vegetation may dry and create high fuel situations on the site. A 30-foot area around the substation shall also be kept clear in accordance with substation safety regulations. California Government Code §51182 requires measures for occupied structures in a very high fire hazard severity zone; however, since the project does not include occupied structures, implementation of those measures would not be necessary.
Land Use	**Compliance with Zoning Regulations (Visual Resources):** In order to meet concurrence on the issue of landscaping, Sierra Pacific Power shall provide a memo to the Nevada County Board of Supervisors explaining why landscaping in a rural area of high wildfire risk is not feasible and not in compliance with substation safety regulations. The memo shall outline and reference applicable safety regulations, define the fire risks, and provide visual examples through photos and/or drawings of how landscaping in an undeveloped area is not needed to maintain the visually acceptable quality of the site. In the same memo, Sierra Pacific Power may also argue that the use of slats in the fence creates additional visual disturbance by calling attention to the substation. The chain link fence becomes almost invisible at certain distances because the background vegetation shows through the fence, and becomes the dominant feature. The slats do not allow views through the substation of the surrounding vegetation and become a visually prominent feature, contrasting with the surrounding landscape. Visual examples of the two fencing methods shall be provided in the memo. The Board of Supervisors may then choose to allow for these deviations in the regulations based on the ultimate goal of providing a visually minimized facility. **Special Use Permit Application:** Sierra Pacific Power shall submit a Special Use Permit Application and fees to the County to allow for the construction of a substation on Forest Preserve lands. The application shall consist of the application form, a cultural resources report, and a biological inventory. Appropriate maps and descriptions of the project shall also be provided in the permit application package.

Cultural Resources	*No mitigation is required for the protection of known cultural resources, as no resources were discovered during the record search or field survey. However, the potential for buried resources is always present. If uncovered during construction, the following mitigation measures shall be taken to reduce impacts to cultural resources to less than significant.* **Discovery of Buried Cultural Resources:** In the unlikely event that buried cultural resources are discovered during the course of project activities, construction operations shall immediately stop within 200 feet of the find and the client shall consult with the appropriate local, state, or federal entities and a qualified archaeologist to determine whether the resource requires further study. Cultural resources could consist of, but not be limited to, artifacts of stone, bone, wood, shell, or other materials, or features, including hearths, structural remains, or dumps. **Discovery of Human Burials:** If human burials are encountered, all work in the area will stop immediately and the Nevada County Coroner's office shall be notified within 48 hours. If the remains are determined to be Native American in origin, both the Native American Heritage Commission and any identified descendants must be notified by the coroner and recommendations for treatment solicited (CEQA Section 15064.5; Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5; Public Resources Code Section 5097.94 and 5097.98).

SECTION II – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Sierra Pacific Power Company Hobart Substation Rebuild Project would result in the removal of the existing equipment at the Hobart substation and the rebuilding of the station with technologically current equipment in a permanent facility at the same site. The equipment taken from the existing substation would be reused at other Sierra Pacific Power Company locations. The access road that leads to the substation would be widened and graveled to allow for improved safety, year-round substation maintenance access, and erosion protection. The substation would be expanded to provide for improved access to the equipment within the substation and to accommodate the new equipment being installed. Sierra Pacific Power Company does not propose (as a part of this project) to extend services from the substation to any new users. The purpose of the substation rebuild is to provide 3-phase service adequate to meet the needs of a customer currently being served through the existing distribution line.

The new facility would be similar to the existing facility with the exception of new concrete footings for the equipment, and a gravel base throughout the substation and on the improved access road. No structures other than substation equipment, a new power pole, and fencing would result from this project.

Location

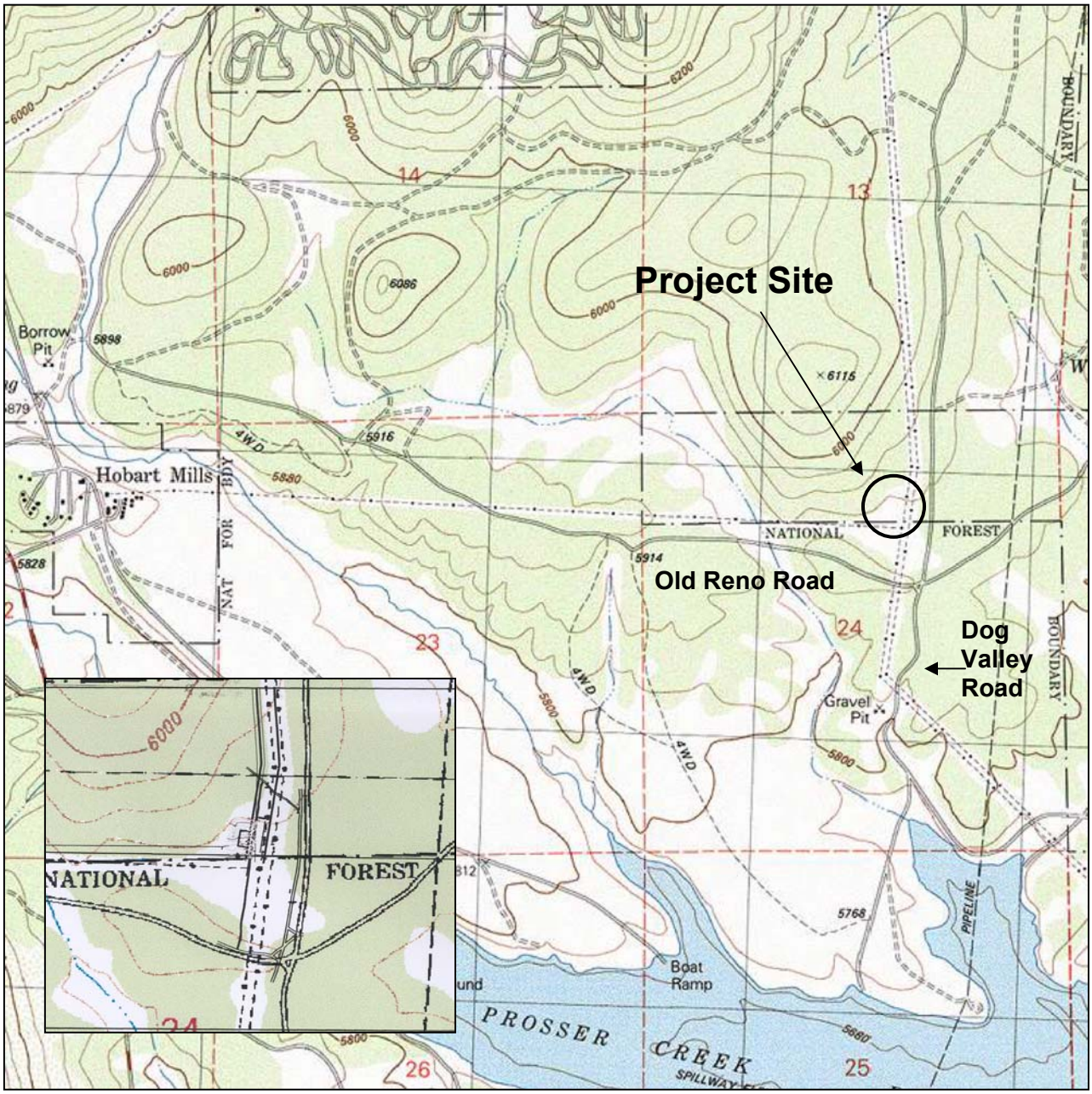
The project is located in the area of Hobart Mills near the town of Truckee, in Nevada County, California. The site is near Prosser Creek Reservoir (Hobart Mills 7.5 Minute USGS Quad) as shown on Figure 1. The project would be located entirely on private land. Public land, under the jurisdiction of the USDA Forest Service, is adjacent to the project site. As depicted in Figure 1, the site is near the intersection of Dog Valley Road (Nevada County Road 889) and Old Reno Road (Nevada County Road 886E).

Existing Conditions

The existing substation was constructed in the early 1960s. Since that time, the substation has not been removed or rebuilt. The Hobart Mills substation is a small facility and serves approximately 40 customers. An unpaved road leads to the substation from a private driveway. The site can be accessed through either Dog Valley Road or Old Reno Road. The existing substation is 30 feet by 30 feet. Equipment is located on wood risers directly on the surface of the ground. There is no aggregate gravel at the facility. A cyclone fence with barbed wire surrounds the substation, along with an oil retention earthen clay berm. The oils used to operate the equipment consist of food quality mineral oil and is a non-toxic, non-hazardous material. Danger and warning signage is posted on the fence to ensure safety and prevent unauthorized access. The area surrounding the substation consists primarily of low growing shrubs and a few scattered trees. A manmade drainage is located on the opposite side of the access road and drains

to the south. Overhead power lines intersect adjacent to the site and provide services beyond the project site.

Figure 1 – Project Location



Source: USGS Hobart Mills 7.5 minute Quadrangle

Purpose and Need

The current equipment for the Hobart Mills substation consists of two single-phase 333 kilo-volt amps (kVA) 60/12.5 kV transformers (connected in an open wye configuration on the 12.5 kV side) which results in a total capacity of 666 kVA. The existing voltage regulators (rated at 50 amps) can regulate up to 720 kVA. Having only two single-phase transformers results in a two phase, open wye distribution system, which can serve only single-phase loads. The actual peak load on the distribution circuit is estimated to be around 100 to 150 kVA.

A customer in the Hobart Mills area has requested service for approximately 500 to 1000 kVA of load, some of it three-phase load. The substation transformers and regulators are inadequate to serve this proposed load and thus Sierra Pacific Power plans to rebuild the substation with a larger transformer and new voltage regulators. A new capacity of 5,000 kVA, three-phase, will be obtained with the substation improvements. The improvements will allow Sierra Pacific Power to (1) meet the service requirements of the customer, (2) accommodate future load growth served from this substation, and (3) make use of standard ratings of equipment, especially the transformer, which can be supplied and "backed up" by spare transformers in the system.

The proposed improvements are the next incremental expansion using equipment in stock. The estimated constructed cost of the project is approximately $200,000. Construction is anticipated to begin on May 1, 2004 and would take approximately 4 months to complete.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Substation Expansion

The existing 30 feet by 30 feet (900 square feet) substation fencing would be enlarged to 60 feet by 75 feet (4,500 square feet). The fence would consist of an 8-foot chain-link fence topped with barbed wire, as is currently used at the existing substation (see Figures 2 and 3). A 30-foot cleared area would surround the fence.

The existing bladed access road (approximately 8 to 10 feet wide) for the adjacent electric transmission line would be widened to 12 feet and surfaced with gravel to provide year-round access. One new pole would be installed to provide the connection into the rebuilt substation from the existing transmission line. Equipment in the substation will be located on new concrete footings. Three concrete footings would be constructed for the transformer, regulator, and recloser, totaling approximately 150 square feet. The entire area of the substation will be covered by gravel and oil containment will be provided for oil-bearing equipment such as transformers and circuit breakers in the form of compacted earthen clay berms. The oil used for the equipment is a non-toxic mineral oil and the total amount to be used would be approximately 3,000 gallons. Approximately 2,350 gallons of this mineral oil would be used for the transformer, a total of 600 gallons would be used for the three regulators, 40 gallons

would be used for the recloser, and 10 gallons would be used for the station power transformer. Clay berms would be compacted to a 90 percent level in order to contain the oil and facilitate the cleanup process in the event of a leak due to equipment failure.

A new guy and anchor will be installed on an existing pole located outside of the substation. Otherwise, no work will be required on the existing 12.5 kilovolt (kV) distribution line. However, the substation rebuild would result in an increase in voltage to 14.4 kV, which would remain within the capacity of the distribution line. The new substation would appear similar to the photo of Osgood Substation below, with the exception that more trees and other vegetation would be in the surrounding area to provide some visual screening.

Construction Process

The first step in constructing the substation would be the site grading. The existing access road would be re-graded and compacted to a width of 12 feet and overlain with gravel to provide both construction and permanent access to the substation. The proposed substation footprint would be contoured and compacted to provide a constant slope across the site in the direction of the natural drainage, at approximately the same slope as the surrounding terrain. Next, the new fence would be installed to secure the site. After fencing, new concrete foundations, poles and framing, and the electrical equipment would be installed. Clay berms would be constructed last to provide containment around oil filled equipment, after which the entire fenced area would be overlain with substation gravel.

Figure 2 – Substation Detail

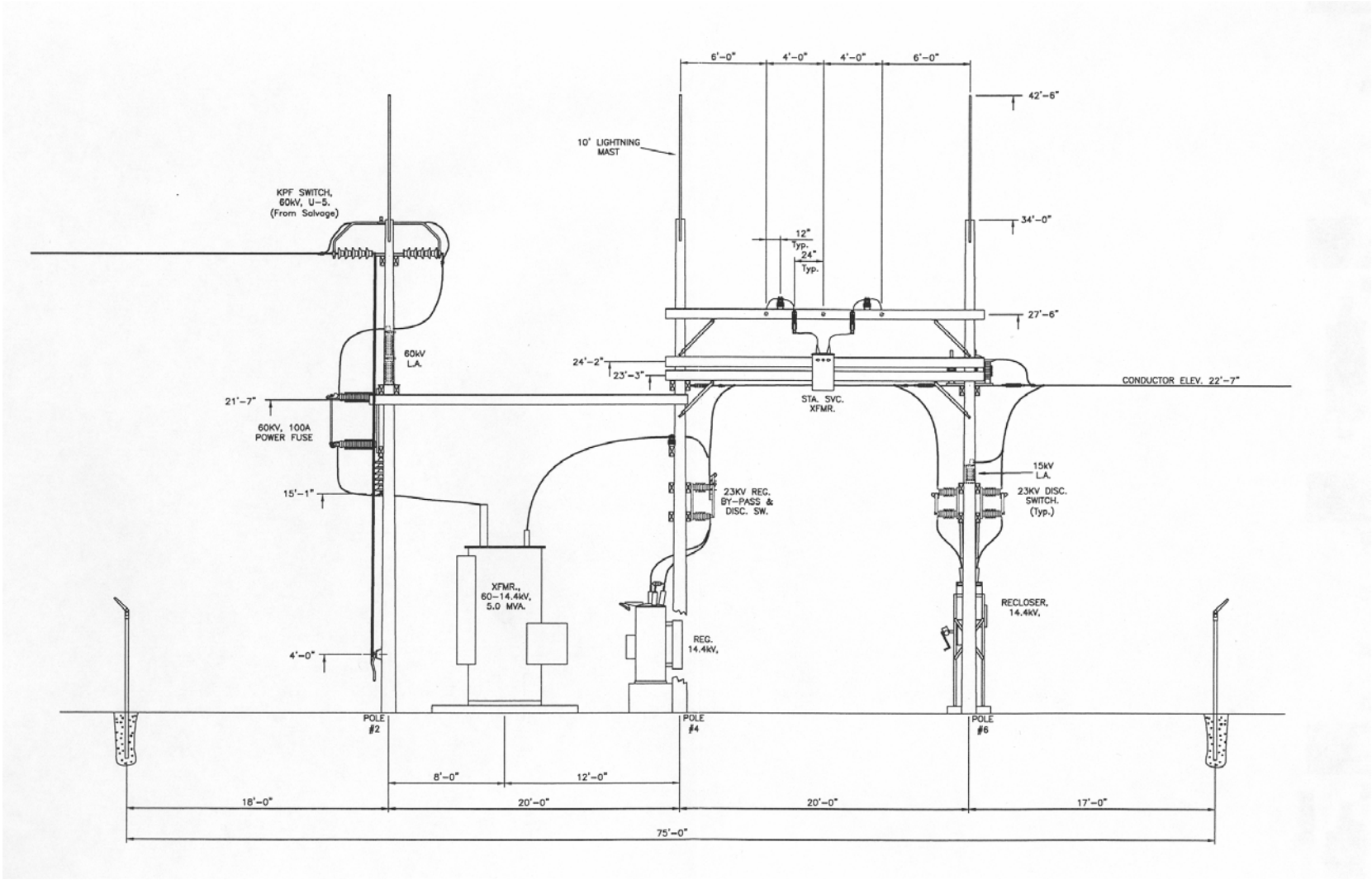
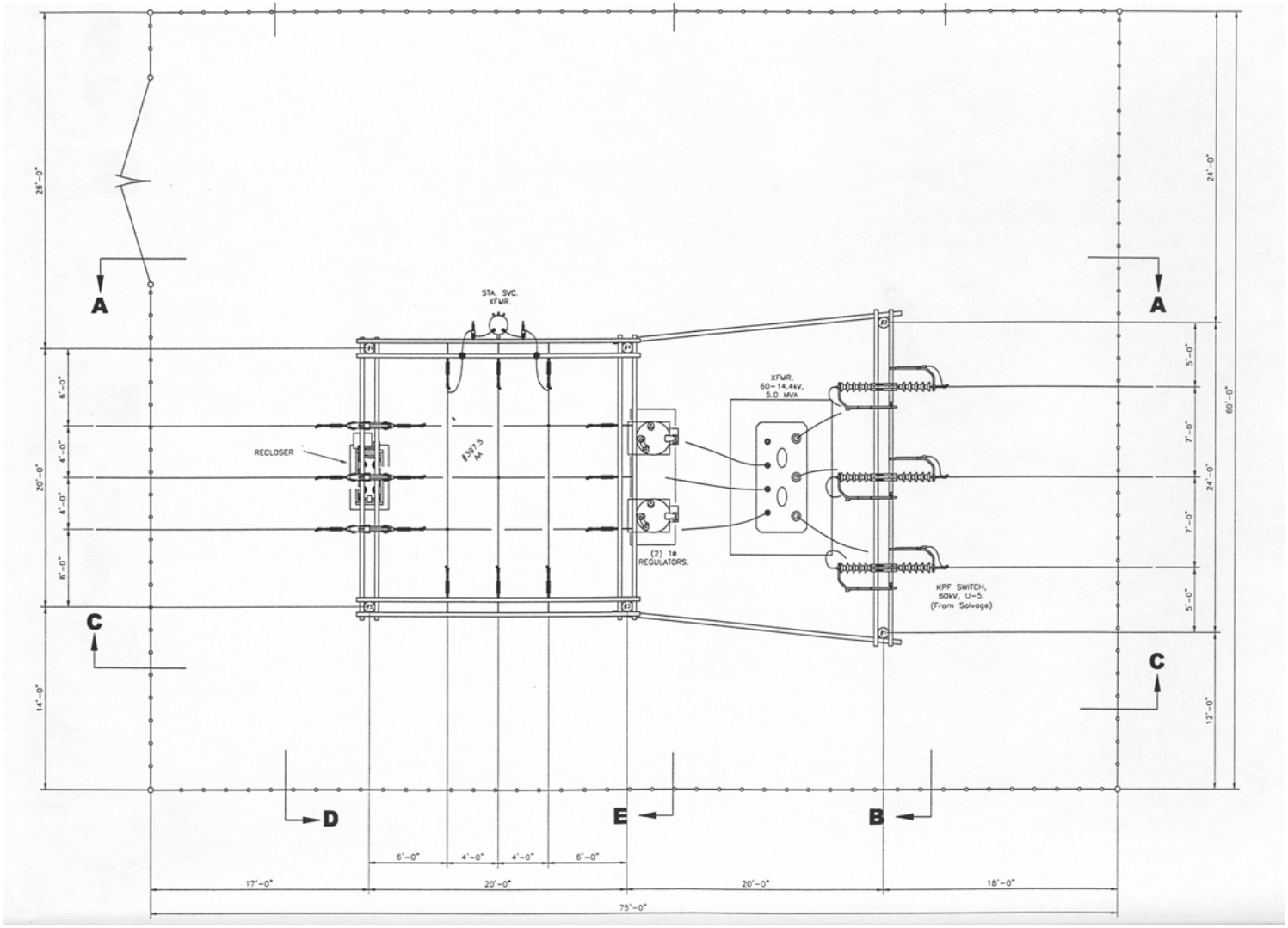


Figure 3 – Overhead View of Substation



Outside of the substation, a new single-pole transmission structure would be placed along the existing transmission line. This structure would support the transmission wires used to feed the new substation. In addition, a new guy and anchor would be installed on an existing single pole distribution structure south of the substation. This structure would continue to support the distribution wires used to feed the substation customers.

After the new substation is energized and placed in service, the existing 30-foot by 30-foot substation will be completely dismantled. All electrical equipment and fencing would be removed from the site, and fencepost excavations backfilled with native soil. The surface of the old site, as well as any surrounding areas that may have been impacted by construction equipment, would be scarified and contoured to the surrounding grades to promote natural revegetation. As part of standard Sierra Pacific Power construction measures, dust suppression watering would occur as needed over areas that are graded and/or cleared to keep the soils moist and prevent the creation of dust.

In order to construct the rebuilt substation, various types of heavy construction equipment would need to access the site to level the site, haul materials to and from the site, and install facilities. The types of vehicles and equipment that could be involved in the construction of the project may include:

- Pick-up trucks
- Boom truck/ Bucket truck
- Crane
- Line truck with auger
- D-8 bulldozer
- Backhoe or front loader
- Semi-tractor and trailer (Lowboy)
- Dump truck

Permit Requirements

Permits would be needed to allow for construction of the facility within Nevada County. These permits include the following:

- Nevada County Special Use Permit to allow for construction of the substation on land zoned Forest and Recreation (FR) and within the Forest Preserve designation.

- Nevada County Building and Grading Permit to allow for construction of the substation within the County.

- Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board NPDES Waste Discharge Permit (Waiver) meant to ensure no pollutants enter water sources during construction of the project. A waiver may be granted as the project involves less than one acre of disturbance.

SECTION III – ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

Sierra Pacific Power Company evaluated a number of alternatives to determine the most efficient and effective action to meet the requested requirements of the existing customer. This section describes the decision analysis process used by Sierra Pacific Power Company to select the proposed project for recommendation to the CPUC. A brief description of the potential impacts associated with the alternatives to the project are also discussed in this section. Since CEQA specifies that a reasonable range of alternatives be considered and evaluated, but does not require in-depth analysis of all project alternatives, the environmental impacts for the alternatives have only been described qualitatively.

Decision Analysis Process

No other alternatives are being considered in this document other than the "no project" alternative, discussed below. Only the proposed site was selected for impact assessment because it is the intersection of both the transmission line (the source of power) and the distribution line, which currently goes to and serves the customer. Any other location would require the construction of a lateral line from either the transmission line, the distribution line or both, which would result in added costs and added environmental impacts for powerline construction. The proposed site also took into account the proximity to existing access, the relationship with the landowner of the existing substation, and the flat terrain, which minimizes the cost of site preparation and reduces environmental impacts.

ALTERNATIVES

No Project Alternative

The No Project Alternative would result in the continued operation of the existing substation at its current capacity and with the existing equipment. No change would occur to the substation or in the level of services provided. The No Project Alternative would not result in any environmental changes; however the continued operation of the substation utilizing the existing equipment and output levels would not meet the objectives of the project and the customer served by the substation would continue to have inadequate service for their proposed project.

SECTION IV – IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

As required by CPUC Rule 17.1 and General Order 131-D, the CEQA Initial Study checklist was used to focus the impact analysis for the proposed project. In conformance with CEQA, the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA) provides information to the CPUC regarding the potential environmental consequences of the project. The methodologies used for determining standards of significance of all impact categories analyzed in the PEA derive from Appendix G of the revised CEQA Guidelines and are described for each environmental topic below. The standards of significance include those regulations and policies from resource agencies and local governments with jurisdiction over the project. Based on the significance criteria, potential impacts are categorized as potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation incorporated, or less than significant. If an impact in the checklist would not occur or is not applicable to the project, "no impact" is checked in the table.

AESTHETICS

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

Environmental Setting

The project site is located in an open area within an existing power line utility corridor. There are no other facilities on the site other than the existing substation. The landscape is primarily low shrubs and other sparse vegetation. Second growth trees are scattered in the area at a low density. Power lines intersect on the site and provide the dominant feature. Beyond the project site, hills and denser canopies of second growth are visible. There is also a meadow area that acts as an outlet to the manmade drainage ditch running parallel to the project site. The following pictures show the visual character of the site:

View of the existing substation and expansion area

View of the substation expansion area

The site is visible from both Old Reno Road and Dog Valley Road, which intersect near the project site. The site is most visible from Dog Valley Road as views from Old Reno Road become blocked by topography. The following photos illustrate the primary views of the project site from these roads.

View of site from Old Reno Road

View of site from Old Reno Road

View of site from Dog Valley Road

View of site from Dog Valley Road

Standards of Significance

Impacts are considered significant if they alter the type of use on the land to create a different visual character on the site. Significant impacts would also occur if the project altered existing scenic resources including trees, earth formations, or buildings, or if the project created a new light source that affected the visibility of the site and views from adjacent areas.

Answers to Checklist Questions

Question A

Although the site is located near public land, no designated scenic vistas are located at or near the site. The project would replace an existing substation with a new, modified substation, approximately twice as large as the existing substation. As viewed from public lands and public roadways, the visual quality of the substation would be unchanged.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question B

The proposed substation site contains three trees that would need to be removed along with the existing vegetation, stumps, and logs on the site. The trees to be removed are visible, but do not contribute significantly to the scenic quality of the site as vegetation is sparse and the area has been noticeably logged in the past. There are no scenic rock outcroppings or historic structures on the site. In addition, the site is not located within a state scenic highway route. Widening of the roadway may require the removal of a small tree, but would not significantly affect the scenic quality of the area

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question C

Since a substation currently exists on the site, the rebuilding of the substation would not significantly alter the existing views. As viewed from adjacent sites, the substation would be widened approximately two times its current size, making it more visible. However, the existing character of the site is of a utility corridor within an undeveloped forest. The site does not currently afford high quality scenic vistas. Although expansion of the site would make it more visible from the surrounding unpaved county roadways, the low level of traffic on these roads and the already disturbed appearance of the site contribute to an existing disturbed scenic quality. The widening of the access roadway would not be visible from adjacent roadways because of the flatness of the project area.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question D

No lights or reflective material are proposed for this project.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Findings

The project would not create adverse aesthetic effects as little visual change from the existing use would occur.

AGRICULTURE

Issues and Supporting Information	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				X
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				X
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?				X

Environmental Setting

The project site is located on private property that is not currently or historically used for agriculture. The site appears to have been cleared at one time, possibly for timber harvest; however no timber harvest or agricultural activities currently exist on the site. The site does not support crop farming and the vegetation on the site is not suitable for ranching operations. The site does not contain prime farmland, unique farmland, farmland of statewide importance and is not contracted under the Williamson Act. The

land uses around the site include a mill and distant developed recreational areas. Much of the land in the vicinity is under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service.

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 been analyzed for potential agricultural impacts.

Answers to Checklist Questions

Questions A through C

The project site is not used, zoned, designated, or near agricultural uses. There are no farm operations on the site, nor is the site considered prime or unique farmland or farmland of statewide importance. The project site is not contracted under the Williamson Act. There are no farm operations in the vicinity of the project. In addition, the nature of the project – the rebuild of an existing substation – would not hinder agricultural operations or cause agricultural operations to convert to urban non-agricultural uses.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Findings

The Project would not result in impacts to agricultural resources or operations.

AIR QUALITY

Issues and Supporting Information	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?			X	
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation.			X	
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?			X	

Issues and Supporting Information	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?				X
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?				X

Environmental Setting

The Truckee area is considered to have an alpine climate, characterized by cold, wet winters and temperate summers. This pattern is caused by seasonal movement of a semi-permanent Pacific high-pressure system. During the summer, the high-pressure system migrates to the north and causes storm tracks to be deflected into Oregon and Washington. As a result, little precipitation from Pacific storms reaches California in the summer months. During the winter, the Pacific high-pressure system migrates south, and storms move into and across the state. Precipitation falls as rain at low elevations and as snow at higher elevations.

According to the California Air Resources Board database, Nevada County is listed as a non-attainment area for ozone and PM_{10} under state standards only. However, reports of pollutant levels monitored from the Truckee Fire Station show that the area has not exceeded pollutant levels as recently as 2000 through 2002. Pollutant levels of ozone were highest in 2001, and in that year the state level for $PM_{2.5}$ was significantly exceeded on one day, which may reveal the presence of a forest fire or other pollutant causing disaster in the area (levels were 120 micrograms per cubic meter when the standard is 65 micrograms per cubic meter and the yearly highest ratings for this pollutant are usually in the range of 20 micrograms per cubic meter for this area). While it is important to note that the county is in non-attainment, the greater Truckee area in which the project is located has not exceeded the state or national pollutant levels.

The project area is near Hobart Mills; however the majority of the area is undeveloped and under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service. No air emissions data for Hobart Mills is available. Unpaved roads surround the site creating dust, but the level of use of these roads is very low and does not significantly contribute to particulate matter release or vehicle emissions. US 80 and SR 89 are located in the vicinity of the project and receive a greater level of traffic than the County unpaved roads, producing larger levels of vehicle emissions. There are no homes or schools in the immediate vicinity of the substation that would be considered sensitive receptors.

Standards of Significance

California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) and National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) are listed in Table IV-1.

Table IV-1

California Ambient Air Quality Standards and National Ambient Air Quality Standards

Pollutant	Averaging Time	California Standards	Federal Standards	
		Concentration	Primary	Secondary
Ozone (O_3)	1 Hour	0.09 ppm (180 ug/m^3)	0.12 ppm (235 ug/m^3)	Same as Primary Standard
	8 Hour	-	0.08 ppm (157 ug/m^3)	Same as Primary Standard
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM_{10})	Annual Geometric Mean	30 ug/m^3	-	Same as Primary Standard
	24 Hour	50 ug/m3	150 ug/m^3	
	Annual Geometric Mean	-	50 ug/m^3	
Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5)	24 Hour	No Separate State Standard	65 ug/m^3	Same as Primary Standard
	Annual Arithmetric Mean		15 ug/m^3	
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	8 Hour	9.0 ppm (10 mg/m^3)	9 ppm (10 mg/m^3)	None
	1 Hour	20 ppm (23 mg/m^3)	35 ppm (40 mg/m^3)	
	8 Hour (Lake Tahoe)	6 ppm (7 mg/m^3)		
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)	Annual Arithmetric Mean	-		
	1 Hour	0.25 ppm (470 ug/m^3)	0.053 pm (100 ug/m^3)	Same as Primary Standard
Lead	30 days average	1.5 ug/m^3	-	-
	Calendar Quarter		1.5 ug/m^3	Same as Primary Standard
Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2)	Annual Arithmetric Mean	-	0.030 ppm (80 ug/m^3)	-
	24 Hour	0.04 ppm (105 ug/m^3)	0.14 ppm (365 ug/m^3)	
	3 Hour	-	-	
	1 Hour	0.25 ppm (655 ug/m^3)	-	0.5 ppm (1300 ug/m^3)

Table IV-1

California Ambient Air Quality Standards and National Ambient Air Quality Standards

Pollutant	Averaging Time	California Standards	Federal Standards	
		Concentration	Primary	Secondary
Visibility Reducing Particles	8 Hour (10 am to 6 pm, PST)	In sufficient amount to produce an extinction coefficient of 0.23 per kilometer – visibility of ten miles or more (0.07-30 miles or more for Lake Tahoe) due to particles when the relative humidity is less than 70 percent.	**No Federal Standards**	
Sulfates	24 Hour	25 ug/m^3		
Hydrogen Sulfide	1 Hour	0.03 ppm (42 ug/m^3)		

Source: California Air Resources Board (1/25/99)

Answers to Checklist Questions

Question A

Although construction is likely to cause emissions through construction equipment emissions and dust over the four-month period, operation of the facility would not cause any pollutants. Watering of exposed soils would occur as part of standard Sierra Pacific Power Company construction measures to reduce dust levels. Construction and maintenance do not conflict with air quality plans and the operation of the facility would not cause an increase of pollutants in the area. No changes are proposed for electrical power production, so the rebuilt substation would not conflict with plans to stabilize air emissions or reduce pollutant levels.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question B

There are currently no air quality violations in the vicinity of the site based on measurements taken in Truckee. The project site is within an area of very little development, and is expected to have improved air quality in comparison with the more populated Town of Truckee. Although dust and vehicle emissions would result during the construction period as a result of clearing, grading, and construction equipment use,

the construction period would last less than four months, during which time, emissions would not always be present. Since pollutant levels are already low in the area, the minor amounts of emissions resulting from project construction would not cause a violation of any air quality standards.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question C

Although Nevada County is in non-attainment for ozone and PM_{10} the area in which the project is located is within the pollutant level standards and does not exceed state or federal limits. The project would result in low increases of ozone from localized travel to and from the site. Grading and clearing of the site may cause PM_{10} emissions to rise in the immediate vicinity of the project during construction. Under standard Sierra Pacific Power Company construction measures, exposed soils would be watered as needed to reduce dust levels. Construction activities would occur over a few weeks in Spring/Summer 2004. The amount and duration of grading would not substantially contribute to particulate emissions, particularly since exposed soils would be watered. Neither of these pollutants would significantly increase during the construction of the project and would not persist during operation of the facility.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question D

There are no sensitive receptors in the area that would be affected by construction grading. No pollutants would be emitted from the substation during operation.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question E

Construction and operation of the substation would not result in the creation of objectionable odors. Electrical transfer does not produce any odors. Construction would primarily consist of grading and the placement of new equipment on the site. These activities would not produce objectionable odors.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Findings

The Project would not result in significant air pollutants or emissions to adversely affect air quality.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Issues and Supporting Information	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?			X	
b) Have a substantially adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U. S. Wildlife Service?				X
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, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				X
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?				X
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				X
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Conservation Community Plan, other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				X

Environmental Setting

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. A detailed setting is provided in the Biological Resources Technical Report (Appendix A)

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.

Answers to Checklist Questions

Question A

Although a northern goshawk PAC and associated nest is located within 0.5 mile of the project site, removal of the trees and installation of the proposed transformer is not expected to have a negative impact on the species.

The approximately 17,424 square foot (0.4 acre) Sagebrush Scrub habitat that is to be cleared from the project site as well as the habitat along the access road that would be widened for installation of the transformer is not anticipated to result in any substantial impact to any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species as none were observed during field visits nor are there any records for such species being present in the project area.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Questions B and C

No riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community that is identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Wildlife Service is present within the project area. The Jeffrey Pine and Sagebrush Scrub communities that are present onsite are not considered sensitive or listed for protection by any plan, policy, regulation or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Wildlife Service.

No federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water act are present onsite, and therefore would not be impacted as a result of project implementation.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question D

The project area falls within the summer range of the Truckee-Loyalton mule deer heard, per California Department of Fish and Game Deer Habitat Maps (1988). A minor migration corridor is delineated approximately 1 mile to the east of the project site. Mule deer are known to use the project area for foraging activities. Installation of the proposed enlarged transformer and associated removal of habitat (less than one acre) would not interfere with the movement of mule deer through the area. The location of the proposed disturbance is in an area such that sufficient space exists surrounding the proposed project area to allow for adequate migration of mule deer and would not impede the movement of other terrestrial wildlife species. The project area is not known to be within any native wildlife nursery sites. No impact would result to the movement of any wildlife species or negatively affect the resident migratory wildlife corridor.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question E

The Nevada County General Plan Section L-II 4.3 Resource Standards outlines policies to protect Major Deer Habitat (Section L-II 4.3.7), Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species and Their Habitat (Section L-II 4.3.12) as well as Trees (Section L-II 4.3.15).

Major Deer Habitat –The proposed project is located in an area that is utilized by mule deer as foraging habitat. The relatively small amount of sagebrush scrub habitat proposed for removal is minor and would not impede the movement or migration of mule deer. No impact to the species would result and no conflict with the Nevada County General Plan would occur.

Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species and Their Habitat – No known occurrences of Rare, Threatened or Endangered species (either under the Endangered Species Act or the California Endangered Species Act) are know to occur within the project area or have habitat that would be impacted as a result of implementation of the proposed project; therefore, no impact would result and no conflict with the Nevada County General Plan would occur.

Trees – The Nevada County General Plan seeks to minimize the removal of existing trees and to protect existing trees during construction. The plan concerns itself with Landmark trees and groves and Heritage trees and groves. Landmark trees are of the species *Quercus* (oak) and heritage trees are hardwood trees that are designated by the County Board of Supervisors. The trees that are present on the project site are neither of the genus *Quercus,* nor are they hardwoods, and therefore, are not subject to these criteria.

No impact or conflict with the Nevada County General Plan would result with implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question F

There are no Habitat Conservation Plans or Natural Conservation Community Plans that involve the subject property. No conflict would occur with implementation of the subject project.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Findings

With implementation of the recommended mitigation described above, the project would not have a significant impact to biological resources.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Issues and Supporting Information	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
5. **CULTURAL RESOURCES**. Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5?				X
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resources pursuant to Section 15064.5?				X
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				X
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?				X

Environmental Setting

The northern Sierra Nevada region has a rich prehistoric, ethnographic and historic record. The prehistoric period spans the time from 8,000 years before present to the time of Euro-American contact in the mid-1800's. The project area falls within the core of traditional Washoe territory. A detailed description of the region's prehistoric, ethnographic, and historic periods can be found in the accompanying technical report (Appendix B).

Standards of Significance

For the purposes of this analysis, cultural resource impacts may be considered significant if the proposed project would result in one or more of the following:

- Cause a substantial change in the significance of a historical or archaeological resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5; or
- Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature.

Answers to Checklist Questions

Questions A through D

The proposed project will have no impact on historical, archaeological, paleontological, or geological resources, and will not disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

Background research and an intensive field survey yielded no evidence of any historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources within a one-mile radius of the project area, nor were any human remains detected.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required for the protection of known cultural resources, as no resources were discovered during the record search or field survey. However, the potential for buried resources is always present. If uncovered during construction, the following mitigation measures shall be taken to reduce impacts to cultural resources to less than significant.

Discovery of Buried Cultural Resources: In the unlikely event that buried cultural resources are discovered during the course of project activities, construction operations shall immediately stop within 200 feet of the find and the client shall consult with the appropriate local, state, or federal entities and a qualified archaeologist to determine whether the resource requires further study. Cultural resources could consist of, but not be limited to, artifacts of stone, bone, wood, shell, or other materials, or features, including hearths, structural remains, or dumps.

Discovery of Human Burials: If human burials are encountered, all work in the area will stop immediately and the Nevada County Coroner's office shall be notified within 48 hours. If the remains are determined to be Native American in origin, both the Native American Heritage Commission and any identified descendants must be notified by the coroner and recommendations for treatment solicited (CEQA Section 15064.5; Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5; Public Resources Code Section 5097.94 and 5097.98).

Findings

The proposed project will have no impact on known cultural resources. No further cultural resources work is necessary unless buried cultural resources are discovered during construction.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Issues and Supporting Information	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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.			X	
(ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?			X	
(iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?			X	
(iv) Landslides?			X	
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?			X	
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?			X	
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-a-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?			X	
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?				X

Environmental Setting

The eastern portion of the County in which the project 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, 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 that may have been the effect of the 1966 Truckee earthquake. This unnamed fault is located adjacent to if not closer to the project site. Earthquakes within the 4.5-6.4 magnitude range have historically occurred in the greater area surrounding the project site, although none have occurred directly on the project site.

The 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 or distance to cause significant damage to the substation.

Standards of Significance

Impacts are considered significant if the project is located on highly unstable soils that would cause the facility to fail. Since the entire area has experienced and is prone to earthquakes, impacts would be considered significant if the project was located on an active fault or within an area that could experience liquefaction and landslides. Significant impacts would also occur if the project caused onsite erosion, which would be exacerbated by grading at depths greater than 5 feet, significant alterations to the topography, or through grading within the late fall through mid-spring seasons.

Answers to Checklist Questions

Question A

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 run the potential of damage during an earthquake, no persons or significant structures would be affected by the location. The likelihood of an impact due to landslide is also less than significant. Although there are hills in the

vicinity, they are of a size, slope, and distance that 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.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question B

According to the Nevada County General Plan Environmental Inventory Erosion Hazard Map, the Project is 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. 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 effect to topsoil may occur, impacts would not be of a significant level and no significant erosion is expected.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question C

The soils on the project site are stable and would be able to support the rebuilt substation. The existing substation has not exhibited any instabilities due to soil structure and the same can be expected for the rebuilt substation. Since the rebuilt substation would be small and contain little coverage or changes in topography, the structures and construction activities would not exhibit pressures great enough to cause an instability on or off the project site.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question D

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.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question E

Since the Project only includes the expansion of an existing electrical substation, no septic systems would be needed or developed on the site.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Findings

The project would not result in adverse impacts to the geology or soils on the project site.

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Issues and Supporting Information	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?			X	
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the likely release of hazardous materials into the environment?			X	
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an exiting or proposed school?				X
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				X

Issues and Supporting Information	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				X
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?				X
g) Impair implementation of, or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X
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?		X		

Environmental Setting

The project site is not located within a hazardous materials site. One Superfund site is located in the County five miles southeast of Nevada City in the western portion of the County. In addition, there are four other hazardous waste cleanup sites in the County, all within Grass Valley and Nevada City (California Department of Toxic Substances Control, http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/database/Calsites/calf002.cfm, site accessed 8/26/03). According to the Nevada County General Plan, 1991, there are additional hazardous waste sites in the County. Of the 35 sites, the majority are gas stations or facilities that involve vehicle maintenance, including Caltrans maintenance areas. None of the listed sites are located near the project site, with the closest being in the Town of Truckee.

The Project site is located within the "Very High" fire hazard zone according to the Nevada County General Plan and is protected by the United States Forest Service. The majority of the County is located within the very high fire hazard zone due to areas of steep slopes with wildland areas of timber and heavy brush. It should be noted that although there are heavily forested areas near the project site, the site itself contains few trees and very low brush. Timber harvesting may have occurred on the site and in the vicinity, thinning the area and reducing the fuel load capacity. Also, the site is located near the intersection of Old Reno and Dog Valley Roads, making the site easily accessible.

Standards of Significance

A significant impact would occur if any amount of hazardous material is released onsite, was encountered onsite during construction, or spills offsite during transport. A significant impact would also occur if the project is located within a designated airport or airstrip hazard area. A significant hazard would occur if the project located persons and structures that could harm persons and property within a known wildfire hazard area

without adequate clearing and resource protection. In addition, the project would result in a significant hazard impact if it interferes or conflicts with the policies contained in an emergency response plan.

Answers to Checklist Questions

Questions A through C

The project does not include the transport of hazardous materials. Expansion of the site would require equipment and facility materials, none of which are hazardous. Routine transport and disposal of hazardous materials would not occur under this substation project. There are no schools within the vicinity of the project. The nearest schools are located in the Town of Truckee. The substation would not require hazardous materials for operation. Non-toxic, food grade mineral oil is used to run the equipment on the site. If the oil leaked from a piece of equipment, the earthen clay berm and gravel surrounding and within the substation would collect the oil so that it does not disturb vegetation or soils beyond the perimeter of the substation and does not enter a larger area of groundwater. Therefore, impacts associated with the release of hazardous materials is considered to be less than significant and no impact would occur to schools or through hauling releases.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question D

Since the project is not located on a site containing hazardous materials, no hazardous materials would be encountered and no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Questions E and F

The project site is not located near a private airstrip, public airport, or within an airport land use plan. No impact to air traffic would occur.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question G

The Project is not located within an emergency evacuation route. Furthermore, the expansion of a substation would not interfere with emergency evacuation as it would not

add to the population, reroute roads, or obstruct evacuation or emergency response in any way. No impact is expected.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question H

The only structures associated with the project are electrical equipment, poles, and fencing. No human occupancy would occur. The site is within a high-risk wildfire area, and the nature of the project, the development of an electrical substation, result in an increased risk of wildfire danger. Trees falling on the substation or vegetation growth near the equipment could result in equipment failure that may ignite sparks and cause dry vegetation to burn. Human risk on the site is minimal, but risk in general is high due to the nature of electricity and the rural character of the site. This impact is potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures

Fire Prevention Measures: As part of best management practices, the areas in which construction occurs shall be cleared of vegetation prior to construction activity. All construction areas shall be equipped with adequate fire suppression devices such as extinguishers and shovels, and all equipment shall be maintained to prevent accidental sparks. Construction safety precautions shall be listed and included in contract specifications. Trees and vegetation within the 9,375 square foot project area shall not be replaced and the area shall be kept clear during regular operation of the facility so that no trees may fall onto the substation and no vegetation may dry and create high fuel situations on the site. A 30-foot area around the substation shall also be kept clear in accordance with substation safety practices.

California Government Code §51182 requires measures for occupied structures in a very high fire hazard severity zone; however, since the project does not include occupied structures, implementation of those measures would not be necessary.

Findings

The Project would not result in any significant impacts associated with hazards or hazardous materials, other than wildfire risks during construction. With implementation of the mitigation under item H above, no significant impacts would occur.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Issues and Supporting Information	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
8. **HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY**. Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?			X	
b) Substantially degrade 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)?			X	
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?			X	
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 surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off site?			X	
e) Create or contribute runoff which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?			X	
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?			X	
g) Place housing within a 100-year floodplain, as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?				X
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?				X
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?				X
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?				X

Environmental Setting

No 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 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.

Standards of Significance

An impact would be considered significant if it resulted in flooding in areas that do not normally receive waters, or place structures within an area of known flooding or potential damage due to 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 to the existing drainage system to a point in which the capacity of the runoff cannot be contained within existing drainage systems. Significant impacts to water quality may occur if hazardous materials are used and allowed to leak onsite or if runoff increases to a level that causes erosion and ultimately increased sedimentation. Excessive use of groundwater supplies so that recharge cannot meet demand, or the installation of improvements that block the flow of groundwater are also considered significant impacts.

Answers to Checklist Questions

Question A

The project would not be located near a water source, nor would it utilize any water for operation. No emissions would result from the operation of the substation. Construction would utilize a small amount of water for cement preparation. Water would be brought onto the site and would not require onsite sources. No waters would be discharged on the project site.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question B

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. In addition, placement of gravel over the roadways and within the facility improves percolation and the removal of potential impurities.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Questions C and D

The site would be graded to provide a single plane surface. Grading at the substation site is estimated at 27 cubic yards of cut and fill. The site is relatively flat and does not contain any streams or waterways. Since no alterations to waterways would occur and the drainage from the site would continue to flow to the south, 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 would remain virtually unchanged and storm waters would continue to be naturally absorbed onsite.

The existing depression on the property, south of the substation site, seasonally ponds and supports vegetation associated with seasonal wetland or ponded areas. Collection of water in the depression is not considered flooding as the depression catches the water and draws it away from structures, access roads, and facilities and contains the water. Since area topography forms a shallow valley, runoff from the substation site would not flow off-site, but would continue to collect in the seasonal depression.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question E

Rebuilding the substation would result in 150 square feet of impervious surface coverage. The remainder of the site would persist similar to current conditions, although the road would be graveled to avoid erosion. The existing artificial drainage created east of the access road would remain intact and would continue to collect any water unable to be absorbed and would deposit the waters in the natural depression southeast of the site. Since the facility operates and would continue to operate using non-toxic food-grade mineral oil, any release of the mineral oil would be absorbed in the compacted soils. Compaction will slow the rate of infiltration and assist in any required clean up efforts. Runoff would continue to occur at nearly the same levels as with the existing facility.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question F

As discussed above, there are no streams on the substation site and due to topography, no means of accessing surrounding waterways. The artificial drainage east of the access

road empties into a natural depression southeast of the site near the intersection of Old Reno Road and Dog Valley Road. The natural seasonal depression holds and percolates the water removing silt and other sediments. Since the facility does not include the use of potentially hazardous materials and does not include extensive grading and other opportunities for erosion, the water quality from run-off would not be significantly altered. The use of gravel and earthen clay berms on the site helps to contain any loose sediment. In addition, graveling the existing unpaved access road would reduce the amount of erosion that may occur, which can increase sediment levels in the drainages. This impact is considered to be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Questions G through J

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. 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 project site is not located near enough a body of water that would cause a seiche or tsunami to be inundated. 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.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Findings

The Project would not result in significant impacts to area hydrology or water quality.

LAND USE AND PLANNING

Issues and Supporting Information	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
9. **LAND USE AND PLANNING**. Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?				X
b) Conflict with an 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?		X		
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural communities conservation plan?			X	

Environmental Setting

The substation site is located entirely within private land in Nevada County, adjacent to public land under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service. The surrounding area is undeveloped. Uses within the vicinity of the project site include Hobart Mills (1.75 miles west), and recreational areas including Prosser Creek Reservoir lakeside campground and Prosser Campground and picnic area (1.75 miles southwest). A residential area is located 1.25 miles northeast of the project site. Since the project site lies at the base of surrounding hills among scattered trees, these adjacent land uses are not visible from the project site.

The Project site is zoned Timberland Preserve Zone (TPZ) and designated as Forest (FOR). According to the Zoning Code, this district was established to "provide for timberland zoning and restrictions to provide for and encourage prudent and responsible forest resource management and continued use of timberlands for the production of timber products and compatible uses" (Section L-II-2.3). Although the development and maintenance of electrical transmission lines is a permitted compatible use, public utility structures, such as the substation, are considered compatible uses subject to a special use permit. According to the site development standards, structures must be set back at least 100 feet from the property line and shall not exceed 45 feet in height. According to the 2002 Zoning Regulations, electrical substations must be low profile and surrounded by a fence. Chain link fences should have slats and landscaping. In addition, earthtone colors should be used and the area should not have impervious surface coverage of more than 5 percent based on Table 2.3.D.2 of the Zoning Code. The Zoning Code also requires a landscape plan for the areas outside the fence of the substation.

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 any of the plans or policies contained in the Nevada County General Plan and Zoning Code, or any HCP in which the

project is proposed to be located. Conflict with one or more policies is considered to be significant.

Answers to Checklist Questions

Question A

Since the project involves the rebuild and expansion of the existing substation facility, no change in land use would occur. Development of the substation would not divide a community as the use of the land would persist within an undeveloped area. There is not a community to divide within the area as the site and surrounding area is undeveloped or used for industrial operations.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question B

Since the substation would be located entirely on private lands, the Tahoe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan would not apply to activities on the site. The Plan only applies to Federally managed land, unless a change in ownership or transfer of ownership occurred (Bill Baker, TNF, 9/15/03).

Development of the new substation within the TPZ zone requires authorization from the County through a Special Use Permit application. The application package must include a letter from the North Central Information Center and if required a Cultural Resources Inventory, a Biological Resources Inventory prepared by a County-approved biologist, a memo from the Environmental Health Department stating that the information is adequate, and a description and maps of site characteristics. Sierra Pacific Power Company will submit this information to the County for project approval. The findings for approval are as follows:

1. To the extent that it is feasible, the project complies with the standards of Section L-II 3.14.F.5.

2. The proposed facilities are consistent with all elements of the Nevada County General Plan and any applicable specific plan.

3. There are no superior and feasible alternatives to the project as proposed.

As discussed in Section III of this document, the only alternative that would result in fewer impacts is the No Project Alternative, which would not, however, meet the objectives and goals of the project and would not provide adequate service for the customer's proposed plans. Therefore, there are no superior/feasible alternatives to the project. In addition, the proposed facilities are consistent with the elements of the Nevada County General Plan and will be compliant with the General Plan and the

standards of Section L-II 3.14.F.5 with the implementation of mitigation measures as discussed within the PEA.

Section L-II 3.14.F.5 of the 2002 Zoning Regulations includes additional design standards for the construction of electrical substations. The rebuilt substation would reach a maximum height of 42 feet to accommodate the 10-foot lightning masts on the line poles, which is under the 45-foot height limitation. Only 150 square feet (2%) of impervious coverage would result from the construction, which is within the 5 percent coverage limitation. In addition, the site would be over 130 feet from the property line due to an existing easement for overhead power lines running north/south near the substation. This set back also complies with the site development standards as discussed in the setting.

Section L-II 3.14.F.5 also requires the installation of a low profile fence around the substation. This project would construct an 8-foot tall chain link fence topped with barbed wire. Since slats are required for chain link fences, green plastic slats would be installed to block views of the equipment while maintaining the natural color scheme. Since the substation is located in an undeveloped area, it could be argued that use of slats calls attention to the substation. By leaving the chain link fence bare, views through the substation of the surrounding natural vegetation would help to hide the presence of the equipment and make the facility less noticeable as shown in the photos below.

Although landscaping is also required, replacement of shrubs would not occur due to fire hazard. No vegetation would be planted within 30 feet of the fencing for safety purposes as wildfire danger is present in the area. The surface of the old site, as well as any surrounding areas that may have been impacted by construction equipment, would be scarified and contoured to the surrounding grades to promote natural revegetation. Although the zoning regulations require a landscaping and irrigation plan, this appears to apply more to urban settings and does not consider the dangers of vegetation near substations which can exacerbate fuel levels and conflict with standard electrical

substation safety guidelines for a 30-foot minimum "clear and defensible space". Although the lack of landscaping does not comply with the zoning regulations, mitigation measures can reduce the significance of this impact.

Mitigation Measures

Compliance with Zoning Regulations (Visual Resources): In order to meet concurrence on the issue of landscaping, Sierra Pacific Power shall provide a memo to the Nevada County Board of Supervisors explaining why landscaping in a rural area of high wildfire risk is not feasible and not in compliance with substation safety regulations. The memo shall outline and reference applicable safety regulations, define the fire risks, and provide visual examples through photos and/or drawings of how landscaping in an undeveloped area is not needed to maintain the visually acceptable quality of the site.

In the same memo, Sierra Pacific Power may also argue that the use of slats in the fence creates additional visual disturbance by calling attention to the substation. The chain link fence becomes almost invisible at certain distances because the background vegetation shows through the fence, and becomes the dominant feature. The slats do not allow views through the substation of the surrounding vegetation and become a visually prominent feature, contrasting with the surrounding landscape. Visual examples of the two fencing methods shall be provided in the memo. The Board of Supervisors may then choose to allow for these deviations in the regulations based on the ultimate goal of providing a visually minimized facility.

Special Use Permit Application: Sierra Pacific Power shall submit a Special Use Permit Application and fees to the County to allow for the construction of a substation on Forest Preserve lands. The application shall consist of the application form, a cultural resources report, and a biological inventory. Appropriate maps and descriptions of the project shall also be provided in the permit application package.

Question C

Please refer to Biological Resources Item F. Rebuilding the substation would not conflict with an established Habitat Conservation Plan or Natural Community Conservation Plan.

Findings

Although the project would not divide the community or conflict with conservation plans, it would require an application for a special use permit and would need to comply with the design guidelines for substations. It can be argued that extensive landscaping may create wildfire safety risks and that the absence of fencing slats is less visually obtrusive and is better able to meet the visual goals of the design guidelines. These issues shall be addressed in the special use permit application. With implementation of the permit and compliance with the final decisions made by the County regarding the design guidelines, the project would result in less than significant impacts to land use and planning.

MINERAL RESOURCES

Issues and Supporting Information	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				X
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?				X

Environmental Setting

Nevada County contains a number of mineral resources, primarily in the western and central portions of the County. Metals produced by the County include gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, chromite, and small amounts of tungsten and manganese (Nevada County General Plan Master Environmental Inventory, 1991). Industrial minerals in the County include barite, quartz, and small amounts of limestone, asbestos, clay, and mineral paint. The project site is not located within an area of historic mineral extraction. A sand and gravel pit is located 0.5 mile south of the project site, and is the nearest mineral extraction area.

Standards of Significance

An impact would occur if the Project was located in an area containing mineral resources or if the Project was located near mineral resources and would inhibit recovery of those resources either through location or type of land use.

Answers to Checklist Questions

Questions A and B

According to the Nevada County General Plan Mineral Land Classification Map (based on information obtained from the California State Geologist, 1991), the project site is not located within or near a Mineral Resource Zone. Since the Project is not located on a mineral resource site, expansion of the substation would not affect mineral extraction within the County. In addition, the location of the substation is distant from other mineral extraction zones in the County; therefore, further development of the site would not prevent access to other mineral extraction zones. Because this is an infrastructure project that does not include the development of sensitive receptor land uses, any future mineral extraction in the area would not be prohibited due to this project.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Findings

The project would not have any impacts to mineral resources or the future recovery of mineral resources.

NOISE

Issues and Supporting Information	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 applicable standards of other agencies?			X	
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?			X	
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?				X
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?			X	
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan, or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				X
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?				X

Environmental Setting

The Project site is located on private property, with no surrounding development. A residence is located on a ridge overlooking the site and it appears timber extraction has occurred within the vicinity. The area is primarily undeveloped and noise levels are very low. The existing substation does not emit significant noise, if any. More noise is created during site access and maintenance than during regular operation. According to the Zoning Code, the maximum noise limits within the Timberland Production Zone between the hours of 7 am and 7 pm are 75 decibels. It should be noted that Section L-II-4.1.7.D.8 also states that these limitations are not applicable during construction activities.

Standards of Significance

A noise impact is considered significant if it exceeds the County noise standards or if it disturbs sensitive receptors (homes, schools, etc.). Impacts would also be significant if the location of the project places project staff within excessive noise producing areas.

Answers to Checklist Questions

Question A

The project is located in an undeveloped area with no residences or sensitive receptors on or immediately adjacent to the project site. There is a residential neighborhood approximately 1.5 miles north of the site and a building that overlooks the site from a ridge, over 0.25 mile from the site. Based upon the distance to the substation site from the residential area, construction noise would not be audible. No significant increase in noise would be generated from operation of the substation above current noise levels. Since the Zoning Code and General Plan do not limit noise levels during construction, the project would not conflict with established noise standards.

Prior to construction, the property owner would be notified of the construction schedule. All construction equipment shall be kept tuned and with appropriate mufflers as standard construction practice.

With the lack of construction noise standards and implementation of standard noise reducing construction practices, this impact is considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question B

The site would be cleared and graded; however, no excavation other than post installation would occur. Large amounts of material would not be removed from the site. There are few persons in the area that could be affected by construction noise or vibration from construction equipment or trucks. Significant groundborne noise and vibration would not result from this project.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question C

The substation would continue to operate using similar, but more current equipment and would be permanently installed, instead of located on temporary wood risers. No change in operational noise levels or output would occur.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question D

Construction of the new substation and removal of the existing substation equipment would generate noise above the existing levels. Grading, dumping, graveling, and other activities will generate noise in an area. Noise would be generated between May and August of 2004, a period of four months. Use of equipment is expected to increase noise levels; however not all equipment would be in operation at the same time. At a distance of 1,000 feet (0.19 mile) a maximum level of noise would be 52 decibels energy equivalent sound level (Leq). The backhoe and front loader would produce roughly 51 to 52 decibels while the crane, dump truck, and dozer would produce roughly 46 decibels at a distance of 1,000 feet, which is closer than the distance to the nearest residential neighborhood. If equipment was used simultaneously, decibel levels between 54 and 60 could be expected at the nearest public roadway. This is not a substantial increase over the non-construction period allowable limit.

As discussed under Question A, standard construction practices of notifying the property owner, keeping equipment tuned and in proper working order, and using standard mufflers appropriate for each piece of equipment would be implemented as part of the project. These actions would prevent any disturbance caused by construction noise.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Questions E through F

The project is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip, public airport, or airport land use plan. No impact in association with air flight noise would occur.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Findings

No significant adverse impacts would occur in relation to noise levels.

POPULATION AND HOUSING

Issues and Supporting Information	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
12. **POPULATION AND HOUSING.** Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?			X	
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X

Environmental Setting

The project site is not located within a residential area and few homes are within the vicinity. One residential neighborhood is located approximately 1.5 miles northwest of the project site. Other scattered single-family residences are also in the vicinity of the project in the Hobart Mills area. According to the U.S. Census, there were approximately 14,037 residents in the Town of Truckee in 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Currently Truckee is experiencing a shortage in affordable housing stock (Truckee 2025 General Plan Briefing Book, http://www.truckee2025.org/brief.htm, accessed 8/14/03).

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.

Answers to Checklist Questions

Question A

No new homes are proposed under this Project. Since the improvement in infrastructure would serve only existing customers and no new transmission lines are proposed to extend service throughout the area, the Project would not directly or indirectly induce population growth.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Questions B and C

The project site is located on private property and would not result in the displacement of any homes or persons on that property. No homes would be removed or affected by the project. The site is primarily undeveloped and would not result in the need to replace homes in another location. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Findings

The Project would not result in significant impacts to population levels or housing opportunities.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Issues and Supporting Information	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
13. **PUBLIC SERVICES**. Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered government facilities, need for new or physically altered government 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 public services:				
a) Fire protection?			X	
b) Police protection?			X	
c) Schools?			X	
d) Parks?			X	
e) Other public facilities?			X	

Environmental Setting

The Project is located outside the Truckee urban service boundary, but is served by County, State, and Federal services. The United States Forest Service provides fire protection for the area and may receive assistance from the Truckee Fire Protection District during severe fire events. In addition, the Forest Service also provides law enforcement protection for the area surrounding the site. The Nevada County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement protection to those areas outside the Tahoe National Forest and Truckee service area boundaries. Since the site is on private land, the Sheriff would provide primary response.

The project is located within the Tahoe-Truckee Joint Unified School District. Schools within this District include Donner Trail Elementary, Kings Beach Elementary, Tahoe Lake Elementary, Glenshire Elementary, Truckee Elementary, Rideout Elementary,

Sierra Mountain Middle School, North Tahoe Intermediate, North Tahoe High School, Sierra High School, and Tahoe Truckee High School. A variety of local, state, and federal parks/land are located in the region of the site. The site is surrounded by Federal land in the Tahoe National Forest and includes campgrounds and picnic areas. The Bureau of Reclamation operates the Prosser Creek Reservoir and provides opportunities for camping and picnicking. The state operated Donner Memorial Park is also located in the greater project region, offering additional camping and recreating opportunities. However, the Truckee Donner Park and Recreation District provides more developed park areas in the Town of Truckee, including swimming pools, community centers, and community parks.

Standards of Significance

A significant impact would occur if the project would result in a demand increase, above one percent of the capacity, for any of the listed public services.

Answers to Checklist Questions

Questions A through E

The Project involves the rebuild of an existing substation to make the facility permanent and improve services. No changes to population levels would occur and no increase in service demand would result from this project. The existing demand on police and fire protection would continue with development of this project. Schools and parks would not be served, nor would they be affected by the rebuild of the substation. This impact is less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Findings

The Project would result in less than significant impacts to public services.

RECREATION

Issues and Supporting Information	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
14. **RECREATION.**				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?			X	
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?				X

Environmental Setting

The project site is located near the Tahoe National Forest and a number of lakes and reservoirs including Prosser Creek Reservoir and Stampede Reservoir. Lakeside campground and Prosser campground, picnic area, and boat ramp are less than 1.5 miles south of the project site at Prosser Creek Reservoir. Hiking and biking trails are located in the vicinity of the project as well including the Commemorative Emigrant Trail and trails leading to the reservoirs. Further from the site there are a number of skiing opportunities at Tahoe Donner and Donner Ski Ranch. There are no recreational uses on the project site as it is under private ownership where trespassing from unauthorized visitors is not allowed. Passive recreational activity is welcome, however, on Forest Service land immediately adjacent to the project site.

Standards of Significance

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

Answers to Checklist Questions

Questions A and B

The project is not located within a recreational area (on public land), and does not include the development of recreational resources or any changes to the recreational opportunities in the Tahoe National Forest. The increase in electrical capacity would only serve the operations of an existing customer in the Hobart Mills area. The project would not result in an increase in population or homes that would require additional recreational facilities. The County roads surrounding the site are used to access recreational areas; however, the Project would not result in any changes to these roadways that would affect recreational access or use in the vicinity of the Project.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Findings

The project would not impact recreation

TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

Issues and Supporting Information	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
15. **TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC.** Would the project:				
a) Cause an increase in the traffic which 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)?			X	
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?			X	
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?				X
d) Substantially increase hazards to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g. farm equipment)?			X	
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?			X	
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?				X
g) Conflict with adopted policies or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?				X

Environmental Setting

The Project is equipped with a dirt access road extending from a private driveway. Access to the site from SR 89 utilizes Old Highway 89, Hobart Mills Road, Old Reno Road (Nevada County Road 886E), and Dog Valley Road (Nevada County Road 889). These roads operate at Level of Service (LOS) A, as they do not receive high traffic levels and are not associated with delays under average circumstances. There are no alternative transportation routes in the vicinity of the project other than bicycle use of the County roads and Emigrant Trail. The General Plan does not designate these roads as "high accident locations".

Standards of Significance

The Project would cause a significant impact if traffic levels exceed LOS maximum levels to cause a change in LOS or if delays over 15 minutes are caused as a result of project construction. Impacts would also occur if parking demand exceeds supply by one vehicle or more and if the project disturbs alternative transportation routes. Road design is considered hazardous if visibility is limited or if angles prevent safe visibility and turning movement, causing one or more accidents. The project must be accessible by emergency vehicles, including fire engines to be considered less than significant. Any alteration to air traffic levels or flight patterns would also be considered significant.

Answers to Checklist Questions

Questions A and B

The Project site is accessed from a private road. Roads used to access the site include Dog Valley Road, Old Reno Road, Hobart Mills Road, Old Highway 89, and SR 89. Continued operation of the substation would not result in daily traffic. Maintenance and inspection of the station would occur at the current rate and would not change as a result of the project. Construction would temporarily increase traffic in the area, but not at a significant rate. Existing equipment to be reused by Sierra Pacific Power Company could be transported offsite in one or two trips. New equipment and materials to be used onsite would need to be transported as well as construction staff. Equipment could be hauled to the site and left onsite for the duration of construction, whereas construction staff would need to travel to and from the site daily. A small temporary increase in traffic levels can be expected; however it would not be of a significant amount or duration to cause LOS levels to be affected. These roads, with the exception of SR 89, experience very little daily traffic and a temporary increase of roughly 8 one-way vehicle trips per weekday over a few weeks of construction would not cause a significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question C

The Project is not located within the immediate vicinity of an airport, nor is it within a land use restricted area due to flight patterns. No impacts to air traffic would occur as a result of this project.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question D

The Project would actually improve the design of the existing access road. The approach to the access road from the private road is currently sharp and difficult to maneuver. With implementation of the project this approach would be widened and a curved approach would replace the existing “T’ approach. Widening of the access road would prevent damage to the edge of the private road and property when trucks or equipment access the site.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question E

The existing access road to the substation would be improved, allowing for better access to the site by all vehicles. The road would be widened to 12 feet and would be graveled to provide year-round access. This is sufficient for emergency access.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question F

No personnel would be located at the substation on a regular basis; therefore, no parking is necessary. Although personnel would access the site on occasion to maintain and inspect the facility, parking is available on the facility access road. No parking areas are needed and no unauthorized parking on other public or private roads would occur.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Question G

The project would not conflict with alternative transportation routes, nor would it prevent the creation or expansion of alternative transportation. The roads surrounding the site would not be affected by the project and the existing access road would be improved. Since the site is not located in an urban area, there are few alternative transportation facilities in the area.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Findings

The Project would not result in significant impacts to transportation. With alterations to the access road, traffic safety and road use would improve and result in a beneficial impact.

UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

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

Environmental Setting

Since the site is rural, it is located outside the service boundaries for the Tahoe Truckee Sanitation District, the Truckee Donner Public Utility District, and the Truckee Sanitary District. Structures in the vicinity rely on septic systems and wells. Waste service can be contracted through Tahoe Truckee Sierra Disposal, which utilizes the Lockwood Regional Landfill in Nevada. Lockwood Regional Landfill serves Northern California and Nevada areas and is operated by Reno Refuse, Inc. Hazardous materials are not accepted at this landfill, which has capacity for an additional 30 years.

Standards of Significance

Impacts were evaluated based on the level of service required for the project compared to the level of service or capacity currently available.

Answers to Checklist Questions

Questions A through F

Since the project consists solely of an electrical power substation, no water would be required to operate the facility and no wastewater would be produced. No restroom or faucets would be present on the site. The site would also not produce solid waste materials. Sierra Pacific Power Company would reuse the equipment, fencing, and risers at another location or for other purposes. Since there are no permanent structures

associated with the existing facility no concrete waste or other foundation waste would occur during the rebuild. Excess soils resulting from site grading would be reused on site to create the earthen clay berm surrounding the fence line of the rebuilt substation. Any waste from construction activities would be hauled to an appropriate refuse collection site. No significant impacts to utilities and services would occur.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Findings

The Project would not result in significant impacts to utilities or service systems.

MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Issues and Supporting Information	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?			X	
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 the past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?			X	
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?			X	

Answers to Checklist Questions

Question A

The project would not threaten cultural and historical resources, nor would it significantly affect biological resources and the quality of the environment. There are no known cultural or historical resources on the site. In addition, the site does not support populations of special status vegetation or wildlife. Due to the small area that would be disturbed for the project and lack of sensitive species on the site, clearing of vegetation

within the project footprint would not result in a significant impact to wildlife or plant communities. The overall environmental quality of the project area would remain the same. Therefore, this impact is considered to be less than significant.

Question B

Rebuilding the substation and continued operation of a substation on this site would not result in impacts that could be considered cumulatively significant. Operation of the substation would result in the same level of risk or disturbance as currently exists. The project would also result in improvements not only to the facility, but also to the roads and the reduction in soil disturbance caused by accessing the site. No cumulatively considerable impacts would occur.

Question C

The project would not result in adverse effects to humans. It would result in an improved facility and improved service to the client. No persons would be staffed at the substation, except for occasional maintenance and upkeep. The substation is located in a rural area and would not result in harmful pollutants or emissions. Since the increase in energy output would only serve to meet the demand of existing customers, the project would not induce growth that may result in indirect effects. The project would have a less than significant impact, on human risk.

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APPENDIX A

Biological Resources Technical Report

APPENDIX B

Cultural Resources Technical Report