

Attachment E-1

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MONTEREY COUNTY HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Erik V. Lundquist, AICP, Director



HOUSING, PLANNING, BUILDING, ENGINEERING, ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

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INITIAL STUDY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Project Title:	Pacific Gas & Electric
File No.:	PLN160131
Project Location:	Tucker Rd / Strawberry Rd., Royal Oaks/Monterey County, CA
Name of Property Owners:	Pennycook, Moreno, Diaz, Bell
Name of Applicant:	Paul Marotto, Pacific Gas & Electric
Assessor's Parcel Number(s):	129-281-009-000, 129-281-007-000, 129-281-008-000, 129-281-017-000
Acreage of Property(s):	28.54 acres, 1,243,202.4 square feet
General Plan Designation:	North County Land Use Plan <u>Rural Residential</u>
Zoning District:	Rural Density Residential, 5 acres per unit, Coastal Zone or "RDR/5 (CZ)"
Lead Agency:	County of Monterey – RMA-HCD <u>Planning Division</u>
Prepared By:	R. Craig Smith, Associate Planner; <u>and revised by Kayla Nelson, Assistant Planner</u>
Date Prepared:	July 27, 2018; <u>Date Revised September 16, 2021</u>
Contact Person:	R. Craig Smith <u>Kayla Nelson</u> , Assistant <u>Associate</u> Planner

Phone Number: 831-796-6408/smith@nelsonk@co.monterey.ca.us

Background

On September 5, 2018, Monterey County circulated ~~Aan Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)~~ ~~was prepared for the project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to address potential impacts to sensitive plants and plant communities from the proposed construction activities~~ for the Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) project located in the vicinity of Tucker Road and Strawberry Road, Royal Oaks. The project included grading and vegetation removal to increase the clearance between ground and powerlines. No comments were received during the 30-day review period from September 5, 2018, to October 5, 2018. However, comments were received October 9, 2018, four days after the comment period expired. The comments contend that the Initial Study ~~was inadequate~~ and that there is a fair argument that the project would have an environmental impact. Based on comments, the Zoning Administrator recommended clarification and amplification of mitigation measures at the Zoning Administrator hearing to improve the clarity and effectiveness of the measures.

On December 6, 2018, the Zoning Administrator adopted the MND and approved the project with the updated mitigation measures. The Zoning Administrator's approval was timely appealed to the Board of Supervisors by Friends Artists and Neighbors of the Elkhorn Slough (FANS) on January 2, 2019. In their appeal, FANS contend that there was a lack of a fair or impartial hearing, the findings and decision were not supported by the evidence, and the decision was contrary to law. On March 26, 2019, the project was continued to a date uncertain by the applicant, ~~Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E)~~, to allow enough time to address the appellants concerns. Since that time, PG&E has consulted with FANS, the California Native Plant Society-Monterey County (CNPS), neighboring property owners Mr. and Mrs. Pennycook, and with Mark Silverstein of the Elkhorn Slough Foundation. Revisions to the project plans have been made as a result of consultation.

On May 17, 2021, a revised restoration plan was submitted by ~~the applicant~~PG&E to the HCD-Planning Division. On September 16, 2021, a final version of the restoration plan was submitted to further clarify restoration efforts requested by FANS. As a result, PG&E is proposing to make the following changes to the project scope ~~to accommodate requests by FANS, the California Native Plant Society-Monterey County (CNPS), neighboring property owners Mr. and Mrs. Pennycook, and through consultations with Mark Silverstein of the Elkhorn Slough Foundation:~~

1. ~~Reducing~~ the cut slope ~~of the habitat restoration area~~ from 2:1 to 3:1 by increasing the grading area from approximately 895 square feet to approximately 2,855 square feet.
2. ~~Revise the re-planting plans to include additional species and increase the number of plants to be replaced.~~Increasing the number of container plants to be replanted in the restoration area. ; Replacement plants will be grown from cuttings and seeds ~~of and~~ continue to include ~~the three special-status species (Pajaro Manzanita, Hooker's Manzanita, and Eastwood's Goldenbush)~~ as well as black sage (*Salvia mellifera*) and bush monkey flower (*Diplacus aurantiacus*). ~~, to a total of at least 180 central maritime chaparral container shrubs~~ will be replanted.
3. ~~Placing~~ gravel in a portion of the roadway area beyond the Limits of Disturbance (LOD) to address drainage concerns.

4. Undertaking a one-time clearing of non-native and invasive vegetation along the access road between the gate and the project restoration area. Smaller plants will be removed by hand or shovel and larger plants will be removed mechanically or by cutting, then treated with a targeted use of herbicides. All cuttings will be bagged and removed to prevent the spread of seeds.
5. Undertaking a one-time clearing of pampas grass around the bases of the 500 kV tower and 230 kV tower across the road, west from and closest to of the restoration area. Smaller plants will be removed by hand or shovel and larger plants will be removed by cutting the vegetation down to the roots, then treated with targeted use of herbicides. All plant cuttings will be bagged and removed from the project site to prevent the spread of seeds.
6. Adding the following Plan Objective to the Habitat Restoration Plan (HRP): The objective of this Habitat Restoration Plan (HRP) is to restore the healthy, vibrant central maritime chaparral habitat that currently exists on a small knoll proposed to be graded within Pacific Gas and Electric Company's (under PG&E's) utility easement lines and to re-establish the three special-status plant species (Pajaro Manzanita, Eastwood's Golden Bush and Hooker's Manzanita) and other native vegetation chaparral plants impacted within the that must be removed within the grading area and limits of disturbance (LOD) as part of the utility safety project. To help accomplish this objective, the project will address existing erosion within the LOD by reducing the slope of the knoll from 2:1 to 3:1 and will remove non-native and invasive species within and adjacent to the knoll that project area that could jeopardize the survival of the special-status plant species before the habitat has been re-established.
7. Clarifying various language and specifications in the HRP restoration plan, such as adding definitions and specifying the removal of certain biodegradable materials.
8. Providing that FANS and CNPS will receive annual reports and updates from PG&E when they are sent to the County, and that CNPS can contact the Site Restoration Manager to obtain updates, including electronic photographs, and to arrange site visits.

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15073.5, a lead agency is required to recirculate an initial study when the document must be substantially revised as defined in Section 15073.5 (b)(1). The above listed revisions to the project Only therequire updates to the originally prepared IS/MND. Revisions to the IS/MND are primarily focused on the project description, environmental setting, Bbiological Rresources discussion, and Mandatory Finding Section of this documents have been identified to have a substantial revision and therefore, these sections are being recirculated. Additionally, two sections have been includedadded since the original circulation to address impacts related to Energy and Wildfire. In order to clearly demonstrate potential effects from the project, discussion of the project description and environmental setting is also providedBecause there is a minor change in the project, and revisions required to the IS/MND, and in an abundance of caution, the County of Monterey has elected to further revise and re-circulateclarify and amplify this document. :

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

A. Description of Project:

The proposed project involves performing powerline maintenance to increase the ground to conductor clearance under a portion of the PG&E Moss Landing-Metcalf 500-kV overhead transmission line to ~~ensure public safety~~minimize fire hazards, increase reliability, and meet Federal minimum vertical clearance from power-line to ground. The existing ground clearance distance between ground and electrical transition lines in the project area is currently 30 feet due to a “knoll” in the topography. The Federal minimum clearance is 36 feet, 4 inches. This project will create a 40-foot ground to line clearance by reducing the elevation of the knoll through grading. PG&E is proposing to restore the native vegetation in the disturbed/graded areas following grading activities. With the intent of the restoration, the project balances fire fuel management with the intent to mitigate long-term maintenance impacts to native plants and plant communities. ~~The project is comprised of g~~Grading activities requiring is proposed to include a cut of approximately 406,400 cubic yards over an area of approximately 895,285 square feet with a depth that ranges from approximately one (1) foot to 6-1/2 to 1/2 feet. This cut area will impact an area of approximately 2,855 square feet. Cut ~~soils are~~s proposed to be hauled off site, except from the top six (6) inches of top-soil which would be stockpiled on a plastic tarp to isolate it from weed seed. This soil would then be redistributed over the ~~895,285~~895,285 square foot cut area and reseeded with local seed stock. The proposed Limit of Disturbance (LOD) is approximately ~~5,164,042~~5,164,042 square feet and includes the grading area, stockpiling of topsoil, and equipment parking/maneuvering. ~~The proposed grading requires vegetation removal consisting of a maritime chaparral plant community and removal of approximately 10 coast live oak trees (Quercus agrifolia) seedlings less than one (1) inch DBH and two (2) Eucalyptus seedlings less than one (1) inch DBH.~~

B. Surrounding Land Uses and Environmental Setting:

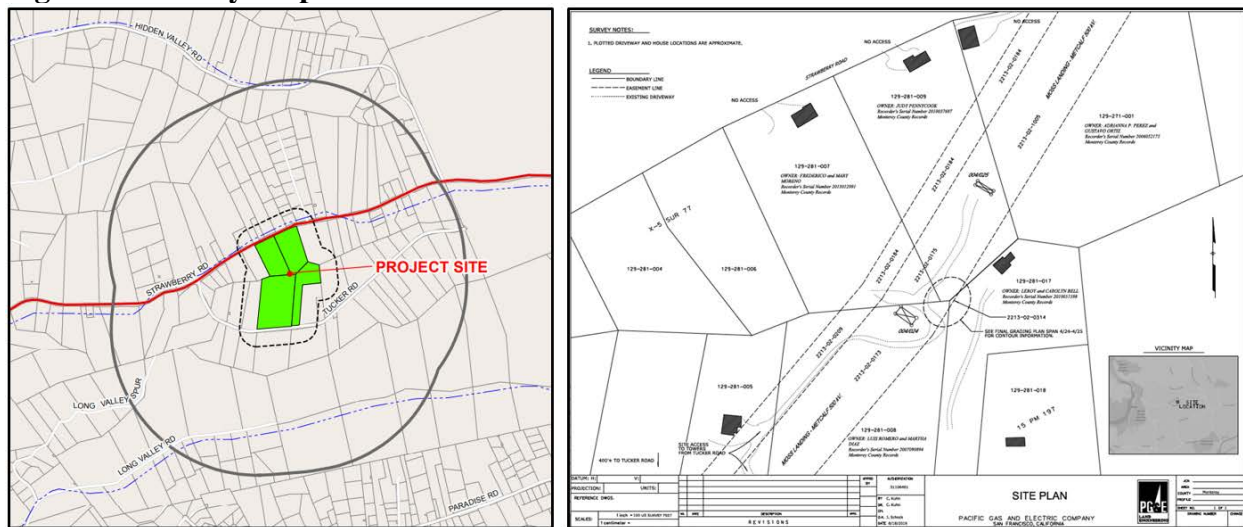
The proposed project is located east of Moss Landing (**Figure 1**) in an area known as the Elkhorn Highlands, at the confluence of four (4) parcels in the Royal Oaks area of Northern Monterey County, specifically, 490 Strawberry Canyon Road, 500 Strawberry Canyon Road, 123 Tucker Road, and 95 Tucker Road. These four (4) parcels will be impacted by the project, with 67 Tucker Road being outside of the LOD but crossed by the private access road. The project site is accessed by an existing driveway connecting to Tucker Road located at 67 Tucker Road (Figure 2). PG&E high voltage transmission lines are attached to large 110-foot-tall steel trellis towers, that run in an south-west/southwest/north-east direction across the properties. These transmission lines are located in a PG&E utility easement and connect the Moss Landing Power plant to San Jose.

The area that will be graded for this project straddles four (4) parcels that are developed with single-family dwellings located downslope of the project location and closer to the respective public roads (Strawberry Canyon or Tucker Roads). The project site is located on a terrace near the apex of a slope and is not visible from the public roadways or from the lower reaches of the private parcels due to topography and vegetation.

In the project area, contains rolling hills with dense stands of oak woodlands, generally on the north facing slopes, and maritime chapparral plant communities, generally on the south facing slopes. The project site is located near the top of a hill between Tucker Road and Strawberry Canyon Road. Tucker Road is accessed from Strawberry Canyon Road and runs south from Strawberry Canyon Road for a short distance then turns west/north-west/northwest paralleling ~~Strawberry Canyon road~~ Strawberry Canyon Road to its terminus (a dead end/dead-end street). Tucker road follows the topography of a small valley south of the project site. Tucker road is developed on both sides with rural density residential uses (5 acre or more lots) and some agricultural uses. To the north of the project area is Strawberry Canyon Road. Within the vicinity of the project, Strawberry Canyon Road follows the topography of a small valley running east/west to connect Elkhorn Road with San Miguel Canyon Road. To the south of Strawberry Canyon Road is rural density residential uses set among an oak woodland. To the north of Strawberry Canyon Road are agricultural uses mixed with rural density residential uses.

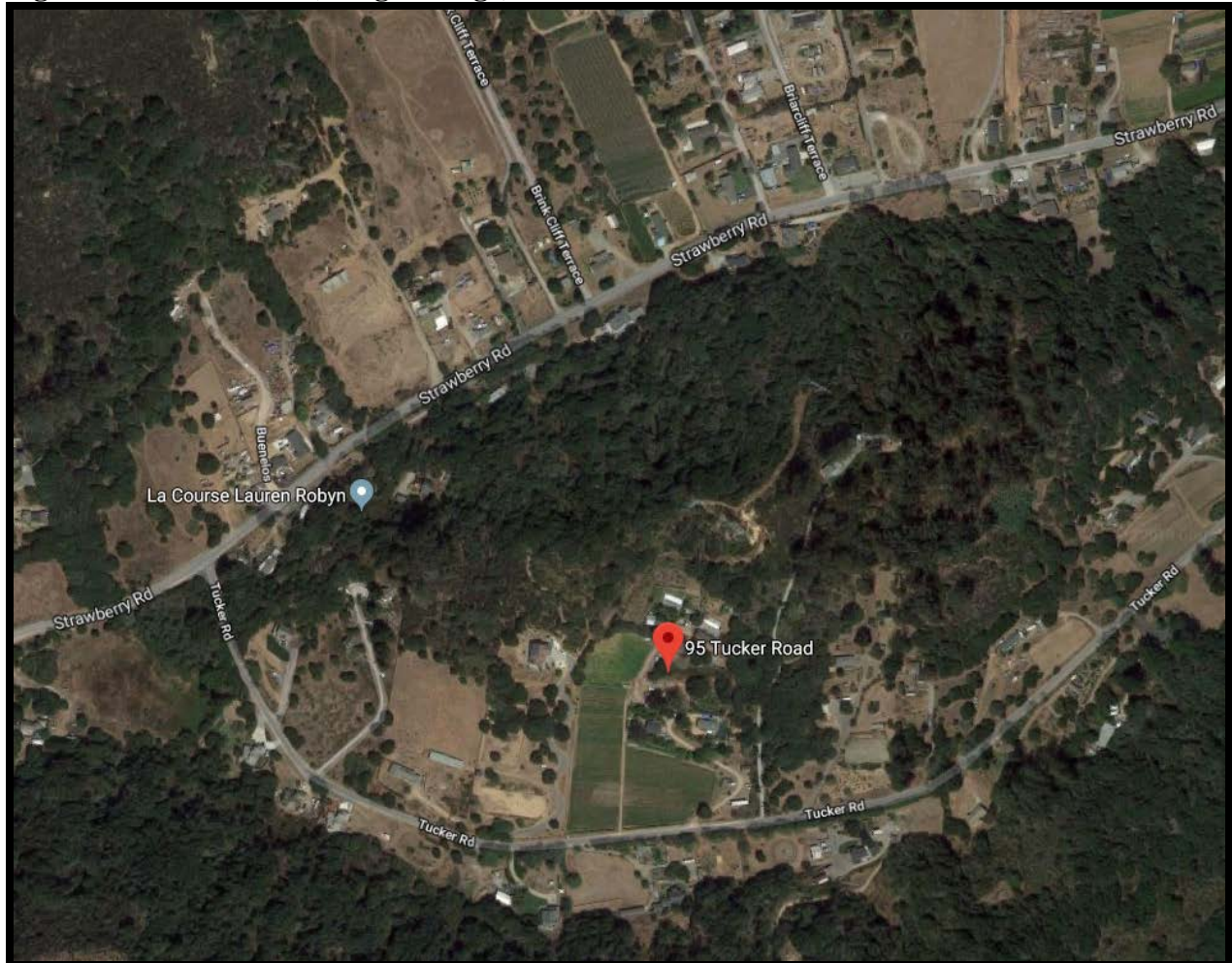
The hill between Tucker Road and Strawberry Canyon Road (where the project is located) contains oak woodlands and maritime chapparral plant communities. A knoll exists on the hill within the PG&E easement and the under the powerlines.

Figure 1. Vicinity Map and Site Plan



The parcels are bounded by Strawberry Canyon Road to the north and Tucker Road to the south, in an area known as the Elkhorn Highlands, approximately two (2) miles east of the Elkhorn Slough. The development area is accessed by an existing driveway connecting to Tucker Road located at 67 Tucker Road (**Figure 2**). The parcels relating to this project are developed with single-family dwellings; 67-95 Tucker Road also contains active agricultural operations in the form of row crops.

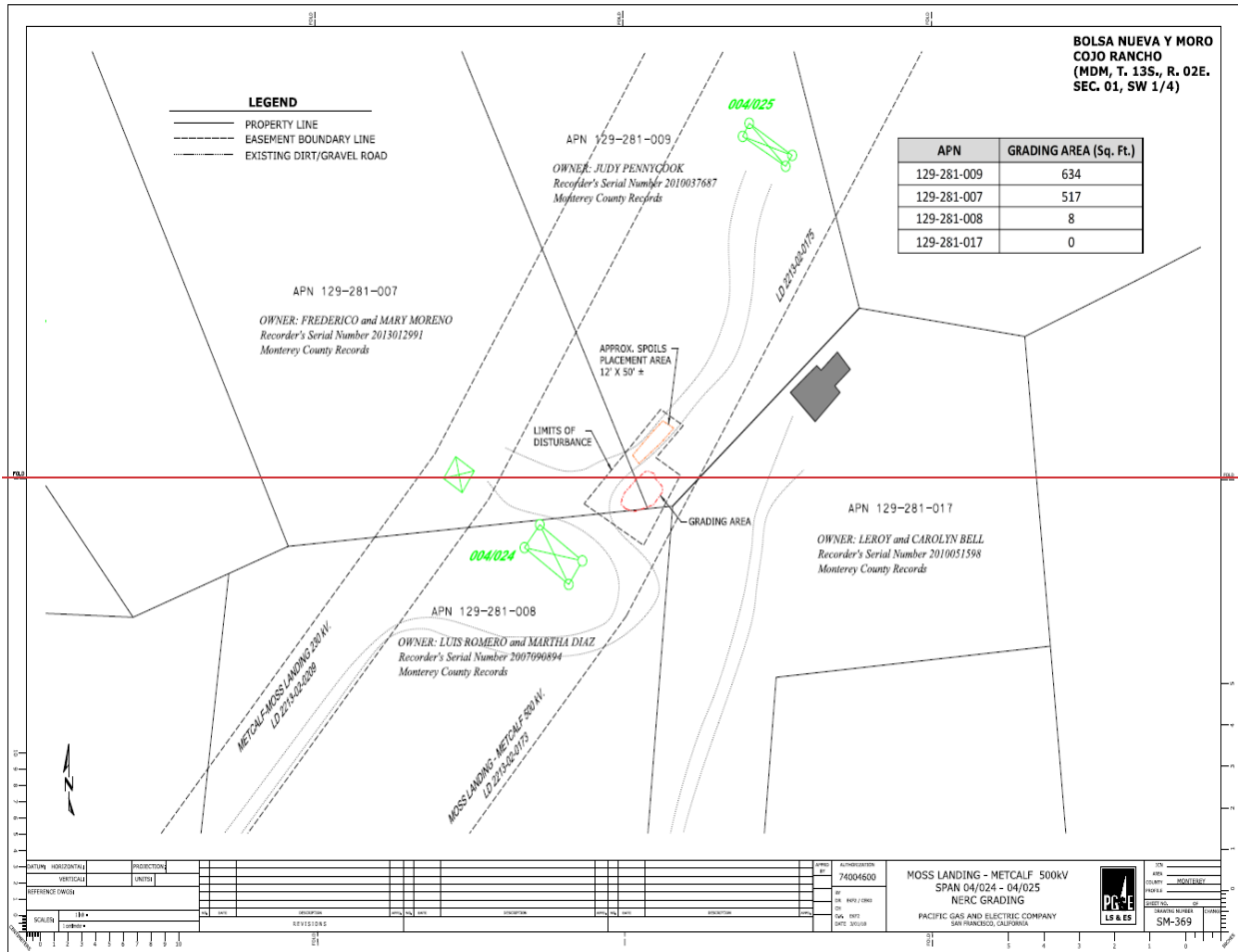
Figure 2. Aerial Photo (Google Image)



The site was disturbed when the power-transmission line was installed in the 1940s and is characterized by disturbed oak forestation and fragmented Central Maritime Chaparral habitat. This portion of the transmission line traverses a ridge with the remnants of a highpoint located between towers 004/024 and 004/025. The site includes a PG&E service road located beneath the power-lines, between towers 004/024 and 004/025. The LOD for this project is contained within the area of previous disturbance (**Figure 3**).

Figure 3. Limits of Disturbance





~~In accordance with the North County Land Use Plan, the presence/absence of environmental sensitive habitat areas (ESHA) shall be determined during the application review process in order to avoid impacts to ESHA to the greatest extent feasible. The determination of whether ESHA is actually present on this site or in the vicinity in any particular situation must be based on an evaluation of both the resources on the ground and knowledge about the sensitivity of the habitat at the time of development consideration. The project location straddles four (4) parcels that are developed with single family dwellings located downslope of the project location, closer to the respective public roads. The project site is isolated from the developed portions of the properties by topography (slopes) and vegetation (predominately live oak woodlands). The project site is located on a terrace near the apex of a slope and is not visible from a public roadway or from the lower reaches of the private parcels.~~

The site is not within an area of high archaeological sensitivity. Therefore, an archeological report was not required in relation to this project. The project proposal was presented to the OCEN for review and comment and the tribal representative did not request any conditions. ~~The geotechnical report confirms no geotechnical hazard would preclude the grading or cause landslide or other slope destabilization. According to the geotechnical report prepared for the project, on-site soil consists of sandy soils, with the upper two (2) feet being loose with subsoils~~

consisting of dense to very dense sandstone. Site improvements have been analyzed and determined to have no potential impacts on the environment.

C. Other public agencies whose approval is required:

~~The proposed project would not require approval from outside agencies. PG&E is regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC). This project has been (or will be) approved by the PUC. Although the project is within the jurisdiction of the PUC, no approval is required from the commission for this permit.~~ No State or Federal permit(s) are required. County approval of the proposed permit is subject to appeal by the California Coastal Commission. In addition, the applicant is required to obtain ministerial grading permits through the Monterey County Building Division, ~~where review and approval by the North County Fire Protection District, Water Resources Agency, and Housing and Community Development (HCD) Planning Division, and Resource Management Agency.~~ ~~HCD Environmental Services Division would also occur.~~

D. Project Impacts:

~~Potential~~ The subject property is not located within a scenic area, Prime or Unique Farmlands, forest land, an area that poses a threat caused by flooding, or on a mineral resource recovery site. The result of the project would not create demand for water, would not create any wastewater, induce or reduce the population or availability of housing, or cause reduction of the existing level of services for fire, police, public schools, or parks. The project would have no impact on aesthetics, agricultural and forest resources, geology or soils, hydrology or water quality, land use or planning, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation or traffic, or utilities and service systems. There would be no potential impacts to cultural/tribal resources caused by the grading activities and no mitigation measures are required. The project site is located in an area with low archaeological sensitivities and none of the subject parcels are within 750 feet of an archaeological buffer (see Section IV, Environmental Checklist, of the Initial Study). Additionally, consultation with OCEN did not result in any conditions or requests.

~~Less than significant~~ impacts have been identified for air quality, biological resources, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise (see Section VI, Environmental Checklist of the Initial Study). ~~Additional discussion on these topics are addressed within the relevant sections below. Other resource categories have been found to have no impacts or less than significant impacts with implementation of the project would incorporate standards requirements and conditions of approval to assure in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.~~ County requirements to the extent that they mitigate the identified potential impacts. Therefore, mitigation measures are not necessary for the project to have a less than significant impact on these resources.

III. PROJECT CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER APPLICABLE LOCAL AND STATE PLANS AND MANDATED LAWS

Use the list below to indicate plans applicable to the project and verify their consistency or non-consistency with project implementation.

General Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Air Quality Mgmt. Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Specific Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Airport Land Use Plans	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water Quality Control Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local Coastal Program-LUP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

General Plan. The proposed project is subject to the North County Land Use Plan and 1982 General Plan. The 1982 General Plan policies apply only where the North County Land use Use Plan is silent (for instance policies related to energy and noise). The project has been –was reviewed for consistency with the 1982 Monterey County General Plan Section IV (Land Use and Planning) and does not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (refer to the Local Coastal Program –LUP discussion below). The project will include short-term construction-related impacts to noise and energy consumption. These impacts are anticipated to be minor and will not exceed any of the thresholds established in the 1982 General Plan. The project will minimize risks associated with existing electric utility lines and vegetation (fire hazards). Minor grading lasting less than a month will occur during daytime hours. Typical dozers and backhoe equipment will be used, and mufflers will be affixed to those machines as required by the Air District. There are no new structures or uses proposed that would increase noise or energy demand long-term. Furthermore, the proposed project does not conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. The proposed project meets all site development standards and is consistent with the land use designation. The proposed development, as conditioned, is consistent with applicable policies. As discussed therein, tThe proposed project would have no impact on land use planningis consistent with the 1982 General Plan. (See Local Coastal Program discussion for more detail on consistency with the North County Land Use Plan Policies).- **CONSISTENT**

Water Quality Control Plan.

The project area lies within Region 3 of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (CCRWQCB) which regulates sources of water quality related issues resulting in actual or potential impairment or degradation of beneficial uses, or the overall degradation of water quality. The project involves grading and vegetation removal that has the potential to cause erosion issues and contribute to the degradation of water quality. In accordance with Chapter 16.12 of the Monterey County Code, the proposed Project has been conditioned by HCD-Environmental Services requiring the applicant to submit a drainage and erosion control plan. Since the project proposes to grade an area of approximately 2,855 square feet, erosion control measures are required and will be installed. Revisions to the plan have been made to reduce cut

slopes and revegetate the area to minimize the potential for ongoing erosion. No long-term runoff or erosion issues will occur. **CONSISTENT**

~~The Regional Water Quality Control Board incorporates the County's General Plan in its preparation of regional water quality plans. The project is consistent with the 1982 Monterey County General Plan and with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) regional population and employment forecast and, therefore, is consistent with the Regional Water Quality Control Plan. The proposed project is limited in scope, does not create new hardscape, and would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. It would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, or create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage. **CONSISTENT**~~

Air Quality Management Plan. Consistency with the 2008 Air Quality Management Plan for Monterey Bay Region (AQMP) and ~~2009-2011-2012-2015~~ Triennial Plan ~~Revision, and~~Revision and is an indication of a project's cumulative adverse impact on the regional air quality (ozone levels), and is not an indication of project specific impacts, which are evaluated according to the Air District's adopted thresholds of significance.

The Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP, Source 5) for the Monterey Bay Region addresses attainment and maintenance of state and federal ambient air quality standards within the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB), including the subject property. Consistency with the AQMP is an indication that the Project avoids contributing to a cumulative adverse impact on air quality; not an indication of project specific impacts which are evaluated according to the Monterey Bay Air Resources District's (MBARD) adopted thresholds of significance. Indirect emissions associated

Inconsistency with the AQMP is considered a significant cumulative air quality impact. The Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) prepared the AQMP for the Monterey Bay Region. The AQMP addresses attainment and maintenance of State and Federal ambient air quality standards with the North Central Coast Air Basin. The NCCAB is in non-attainment for Ozone (O₃) and the 8 hour State standards for inhalable particulate matter (PM₁₀). This project will contribute to PM₁₀ and O₃ emissions. The basic strategy for improving air quality is to reduce emissions of those air pollutants which cause violations of ambient air quality standards.

Ozone is a regional pollutant which forms over large areas as the source pollutants, Nitrogen Oxide (NO_x) and Reactive Organic Gases (ROG), travel downwind. Consequently, reductions in NO_x and ROG emissions over the entire region, including the NCCAB as well as adjacent major urbanized air basins, are needed. MBARD plans to reduce Ozone through grant programs that reduce ROG and NO_x emissions by offering incentives to reduce emissions from transportation sources, marine vessels, agricultural irrigation pumps, and off-road vehicles. PM₁₀ emissions are Particulate Matter Less Than 10 Microns in Diameter. PM₁₀ can be emitted from many sources including chemical reactions, fires, diesel engines and dust and dirt carried by wind and water.

The project proposes grading of ~~106-400~~ cubic yards over an area of approximately ~~8952,855~~ square feet. The grading is a maintenance activity, is not growth inducing, and would not result in any population increase in the vicinity or region. It was determined that the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the AQMP. There would be no stationary emissions associated with completion the proposed project. The MBARD CEQA Air Quality Guidelines defines construction activities with potentially significant impacts for PM₁₀ if they include 2.2 acres of disturbance a day. The project requires approximately ~~0.16-0.14~~ acre of

total disturbance, and therefore would not result in a significant impact to air quality and would be consistent with the AQMP. **CONSISTENT**

Local Coastal Program-LUP. The North County Land Use Plan (Coastal)- Section 2.3 regulates development in and adjacent to Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA). The project would impact Maritime Chaparral plant communities which are designated as ESHA in the NCLUP. In this case, the development is required to protect health and safety by increasing vertical clearance between the ground and existing powerlines, thereby minimizing the risks for fire generated by sparking powerlines. The development must occur within the proposed location and protection of the habitat is not possible under the circumstances of this case (Policy 2.3.1). Grading and removal of vegetation in ESHA is limited to an area of land under an existing utility transmission line that must be recontoured to provide adequate clearance to enhance public safety and reduce the risk of accidental fire. This is the minimum disturbance necessary (Policy 2.3.2.8). Two biological reports and a Habitat Restoration Plan have been prepared for the proposed development in accordance with Policy 2.3.2.4, and as proposed, conditioned, and mitigated, the project is compatible with the long-term maintenance of these resources (Policy 2.3.2.3). The applicant's biologist has recommended mitigation measures that include restoration of native plants and plant communities following grading activities. Section 2.8 of the NCLUP regulates land uses and development in areas with high fire hazards through best available planning practices in order to minimize risks to life and property damage to the natural environment. The project does not propose any new structures and the goal of the grading plan is to increase the ground to electrical transmission line clearance to reduce the potential for wildfire by meeting Federal safety standards (Key Policy 2.8.1). Additionally, Section 4.3 of the NCLUP (Land Use Plan and Development Policies) discusses whether the project physically divides an established community; conflicts with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project; or conflicts with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. -The project is limited in scope and does not include any structural development, road making, or extension of water, sewer, electrical lines, or other public or private utilities. -The project would not impact agricultural resources, coastal resources or diminish the rural character of the immediate area or region. As discussed therein, the proposed project is consistent with the North County LUP. **CONSISTENT**

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED AND DETERMINATION

A. FACTORS

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, as discussed within the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Aesthetics</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Agriculture and Forest Resources</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Air Quality</u> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Biological Resources</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Cultural Resources</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Energy</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Geology/Soils</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Greenhouse Gas Emissions</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Hazards/Hazardous Materials</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Hydrology/Water Quality</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Land Use/Planning</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Mineral Resources</u> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Noise</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Population/Housing</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Public Services</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Recreation</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Transportation/Traffic</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Tribal Cultural Resources</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Utilities/Service Systems</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Wildfires</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Mandatory Findings of Significance</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Aesthetics</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Agriculture and Forest Resources</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Air Quality</u> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Biological Resources</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Cultural Resources</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Geology/Soils</u> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Greenhouse Gas Emissions</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Hazards/Hazardous Materials</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Hydrology/Water Quality</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Land Use/Planning</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Mineral Resources</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Noise</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Population/Housing</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Public Services</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Recreation</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Transportation/Traffic</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Utilities/Service Systems</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Mandatory Findings of Significance</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Tribal Cultural Resources</u> | | |

Some proposed applications that are not exempt from CEQA review may have little or no potential for adverse environmental impact related to most of the topics in the Environmental Checklist; and/or potential impacts may involve only a few limited subject areas. These types of projects are generally minor in scope, located in a non-sensitive environment, and are easily identifiable and without public controversy. For the environmental issue areas where there is no potential for significant environmental impact (and not checked above), the following finding can be made using the project description, environmental setting, or other information as supporting evidence.

Check here if this finding is not applicable

FINDING: For the above referenced topics that are not checked off, there is no potential for significant environmental impact to occur from either construction, operation or maintenance of the proposed project and no further discussion in the Environmental Checklist is necessary.

EVIDENCE:

Section IV.1 Aesthetics.

The proposed grading activity is located about two (2) miles east of the Elkhorn Slough in an area is known locally as the Elkhorn Highlands. The project site is between Strawberry Road and Tucker Road at the confluence of four (4) parcels, upslope from Tucker Road and on the backside of the ridge from Strawberry Road. The grading site is not visible from a public roadway due to topography and forestation. There is no structural development associated with this project. The project would not result in new structural improvements that would have any impacts on the public viewshed, ~~would silhouette against the sky or backdrop, or would be visible from Strawberry Road or Tucker Road.~~ Implementation of the project would result in no impact to visual resources ~~and would not result in a conflict with policies/regulations adopted for avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.~~ There is no lighting proposed with the objective and implementation of the grading activity and the project will have no impact on the aesthetics of the immediate area, the Royal Oaks area, or the North County planning area. Vegetation will be restored following grading activities (Source: IX.1, 3, 4, & 6). *Therefore, the project would have no impact on aesthetic resources or visual resources: No Impact.*

Section IV.2 - Agricultural and Forest Resources: The subject properties are located within a rural area characterized by low density residential development and intermittent agricultural uses. One property with active agricultural uses is within proximity of the project site, but the scope of this project would not interfere with the agricultural ~~operations~~ ~~operations~~, nor would the project convert agricultural or potentially agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses. Furthermore, the Monterey County Geographical Information Systems (GIS) indicates that the subject property is not located within any area classified as Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Additionally, forestation is in close proximity of the project, however, the limits of disturbance associated with the project does not contain any mature trees; the trees identified for removal are juvenile and typically about one (1) inch in diameter. (Source: IX.1, 2, 3, 6, & 7). *Therefore, the project would have no impact on agricultural resources or forest resources: No Impact.*

Section IV.5 Cultural Resources. Monterey County Geographic Information System (GIS) indicates that the subject properties and specific project site is located within an area of low archeological sensitivity. The project site is not located within 750 feet of a known archeological site; therefore, an archeological report was not prepared. Regardless, ~~RMAHCD-Planning Division~~ will apply a standard condition of approval which requires work to be halted if cultural, archeological, ~~historical~~ ~~historical~~, or paleontological resources are accidentally uncovered until a qualified professional archaeologist can evaluate it. Incorporating this condition of approval and requiring notation on the plans to this effect is a standard practice of Monterey County ~~RMAHCD-Planning Division~~ ~~department~~ for negative archeological reports and would reduce the potential for impacts to a less than significant level. *Therefore, the project*

would have no impact on archaeological resources or cultural resources. No impact. (Source: IX.1, 3, & 7).

Section IV. 26 Energy. The project includes grading and revegetation of the site. Grading activities will require the use of mechanical equipment on a temporary basis. Grading and use of mechanical equipment ~~is~~ are typical of minor earthwork projects. No long-term energy demands would result from this project. The County does not have an adopted energy management plan but does have general plan policies that require adoption of such plans and encourage energy efficiency in all development. This project will use fuels and temporary energy sources as needed to complete grading and vegetation work. Therefore, the project would not conflict with energy efficiency plans and would not require any ongoing demands for energy sources. (Source IX. 1, 2, 3, 9--)

Section IV. 8-9 Hazards/Hazardous Materials. There are no known hazards or hazardous materials associated with this project. There would be no use of hazardous materials that would constitute a threat of explosion or other significant release that would pose a threat to neighboring properties. The project, given the nature of its proposed use, would not result in the transport, use, or disposal of any hazardous materials to or from this site. The proposed grading activities would not result in stationary operations that would create hazardous emissions or handle hazardous materials or other significant release that would pose a threat to neighboring properties, the public, any nearby schools, or the environment. The site location and scale would have no impact on emergency response or emergency evacuation. The site is not located near an airport or airstrip. The North County Fire Protection District reviewed the project application and did not have any recommended conditions of approval regarding fire safety. The subject properties are not found on the Cortese List or listed as a California Superfund. Furthermore, the project is to enhance public safety by increasing the vertical distance between the ground and the powerlines above, thus reducing the potential for fires resulting from unintended electrical ignition of the landscape (Source: IX.1, 2, 3, 6, 7). *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts related to hazards/hazardous materials. No impact.*

Section IV. 9-10 Hydrology/Water Quality. The proposed project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements nor substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area. The proposed project is not located within a 100-year floodplain and would not impede or redirect flood flows. The specific project location is not being served by a public water purveyor or private well, does not require water resources to fulfill its purpose, and does not generate ~~waste-water~~wastewater and thus require any sanitary facilities in its operations. There has been no indication that the proposed grading activity would create a significant impact to the existing services. The proposed project would not require a SWPPP. The Monterey County Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and review by the Monterey County Water Resources Agency indicate that the subject property is not located within a 100-year floodplain, ~~were~~where flooding would result in the failure of a dam or ~~levee, or~~levee or impede or redirect water flows. The project would incorporate Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control potential temporary erosion events. (Source: IX. 1, 3, 6, 7). *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts related to hydrology or water quality. No impact.*

Section IV.10-11 Land Use/Planning. The proposed project would not disrupt, divide, or otherwise have a negative impact upon the existing neighborhood or adjacent properties. The project site is designated for Rural Residential uses, but does not include establishment of a residential use, therefore, would not result in an increase in population or divide an established community. Altering approximately 8952,855 square feet of the landform of a cumulative 28.5-acre site is consistent with uses allowed in this land use designation. The project would not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, local coastal plan, or zoning ordinance. As designed and conditioned, the proposed project is consistent with applicable County policies as discussed in Section III (Source: IX. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, & 9). *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts to land use/planning. No impact.*

Section IV.11-12 Mineral Resources. Review of the Monterey County Geographic Information System indicate that the project site location contains no known commercially viable mineral resources, no minerals have been identified on this site or would be affected by this project. Furthermore, the project does not include mineral extraction or harvesting (Source: IX. 1, 2, 3, 6, & 7). *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts to mineral resources. No impact.*

Section IV.13-14 Population/Housing. The proposed project is located on portions of four (4) separate parcels under separate ownership. It would not induce substantial population growth in the area, either directly through grading to increase the vertical clearance of the powerlines located above the site, or indirectly by increasing the transmission line capacity; no new infrastructure would be extended to the site. The project would not alter the location, distribution, or density of human population in the area in any significant ~~way, or way or~~ create a demand for additional housing in the area or regionally (Source: IX.1, 2, 3, 6, 7). *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts related to population and housing. No impact.*

Section IV.14-15 Public Services. The proposed project is limited to grading that would result in an increased vertical clearance between the ground and the powerlines above. The project would have no measurable effect on existing public services and would not require expansion of any services to serve the project. The purpose of the project is to enhance public safety relating to electric transmission lines. The North County County Fire Protection District, Monterey County Water Resources Agency, ~~RMA-HCD Public Works Department Development Services~~, and Environmental Health Division have reviewed the project. Some of these agencies provided comments on the project, which are incorporated into the project as conditions of approval. None of the County departments/service providers indicated that this project would result in significant impacts (Source: IX.1, 2, 3, 6, 7). *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts related to public services. No impact.*

Section IV.15-16 Recreation. The proposed project would not result in an increase in the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities which would cause substantial physical deterioration in recreational facilities. The proposed project does not include or require construction or expansion of recreation facilities. The project would not create significant recreational demands. No in lieu fees or dedication of land for regional parks would be required (Source: IX.1, 2, 3, 6, 7). *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts related to recreation. No impact.*

Section IV.16-17 Transportation/Traffic. The proposed project represents grading activities to enhance public safety and does not rely on public streets for direct access. The grading on the project site would not significantly increase traffic in a ~~permanent~~ way but would temporarily increase trips generated by the work crew to the grading site. The work vehicles associated with this project would ~~is-be~~ approximately four (4) vehicles, thus there is potential to add approximately eight (8) trips daily for approximately ~~five-seven (7) (5)~~ days to the local roadways. There would be no traffic increases associated with this project once the project is completed, thus, no adverse impact is expected (Source: IX. 1, 2, & 7). *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts related to traffic. No impact.*

Section IV.17-18 Tribal Cultural Resources. The proposed project is located in an area with low archaeological sensitivity. Regardless, the proposed project was presented to the OCEN tribal consultation ~~meeting~~, and it was determined that the project site would not affect, disrupt or affect tribal cultural resources. The project site is not eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or Monterey County historical or cultural resources. The project location is not a culturally sensitive location or setting for the OCEN tribes (Source: IX. 1, 7). *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts related to traffic. No impact.*

Section IV.18-19 Utilities/Services. The proposed project consists of limited grading activities to increase the vertical clearance to the powerlines above. There is no demand or need for wastewater treatment resulting from the project. Similarly, there would be no demand or need for water for the project which would cause an expansion to any facilities. The spoils from the grading activity (cut) would be removed from the site. The project would not generate solid waste, directly or indirectly, and would thus comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Therefore, the project would have no impact on utilities or service systems (Source: IX. 1, 3, 6, 7). *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts related to utilities/services. No impact.*

Section IV.20 Wildfire. The purpose of the proposed grading activity is to increase the ground to electrical transmission line clearance to reduce the potential for wildfire. The potential for electrical transmission lines to spark wildfires has been extensively documented. PG & E is attempting to mitigate fire hazards and to comply with minimum federal standards by lowering the height of a knoll (the ground) under existing high voltage transmission lines. The project would reduce fire hazards and would not establish any new uses or structures that have the potential to exacerbate fire conditions. (Source IX. 1, 2, 3, 4, 9,....)

B. DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated” impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Kayla Nelson

Signature

September 16, 2021

Date

~~R. Craig Smith~~ Kayla Nelson

~~Associate Assistant~~ Planner

V. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

- 1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except “No Impact” answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A “No Impact” answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on project-specific screening analysis).
- 2) All answers must take into account the whole action involved, including offsite as well as onsite, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
- 3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
- 4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level mitigation measures from Section XVII, "Earlier Analyses," may be cross-referenced).
- 5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
 - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
 - b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
 - c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
- 6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a

previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.

- 7) **Supporting Information Sources:** A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
- 8) The explanation of each issue should identify:
 - a) The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - b) The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

1. AESTHETICS		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
a)	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? (Source: 1, 3, 4, & 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b)	Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? (Source: 1, 3, 4, & 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c)	Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings? (1, 3, 4, & 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d)	Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? (Source: 1, 3, 4, & 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion: No Impact

See Section II.B (Project Description), C (Environmental Setting), and Section IV.A (Environmental Factors Potentially Affected) above, as well as sources listed.

2. AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST 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 Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state’s inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, & 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, & 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, & 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, & 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, & 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion: No Impact

See Section II.B (Project Description), C (Environmental Setting), and Section IV.A (Environmental Factors Potentially Affected) above, as well as sources listed.

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:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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)? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in significant construction-related air quality impacts? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

In order to provide protection and enhancement of Monterey County’s air quality, the Monterey County 1982 General Plan (General Plan, Source 2) Policy No. 20.1.1 requires development decisions to be consistent with the natural limitation of the County’s air basins. Additionally, Policy 20.2.4 of the General Plan requires the County to operate in accordance with current regional, state, and federal air quality standards while Policy 20.2.5 encourages the use of the “best available control technology” defined the current rules of the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD). The California Air Resources Board (CARB) coordinates and oversees both state and federal air quality control programs in California and has established 14 air basins statewide. The project site is located in the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB), which is under the jurisdiction of the MBARD. The MBARD is responsible for enforcing standards and regulating stationary sources through the 2008 *Air Quality Management Plan for the Monterey Bay Region (AQMP)* and 2009-2011 Triennial Plan Revision [and the 2012-2015 revisions](#) (“Revisions”) to evaluate a project’s potential for cumulative adverse impact on regional air quality (ozone levels).

3 (a), (b), (c), (e) and (f). Conclusion: No Impact.

The AQMP [and Revisions](#) addresses state air quality standards. Population-generating projects that are within the AQMP population forecasts are considered consistent with the plan. The proposed project is not growth-inducing and is considered a maintenance activity. The project scope consists of grading of approximately ~~106-400~~ cubic yards over an area of approximately ~~895-2,855~~ square feet and therefore it would not generate any increase in population. Because there is no potential for increased population resulting from this project, the proposed project is consistent with the AQMP and would have no impact to the base line air quality within the MBARD or State base line air quality.

The proposed construction activities would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people due to the scale of the proposed construction and the isolation of the specific project site in relation to the residential uses in the vicinity. Therefore, no impacts related to generation of odors are expected to occur. See Previous Section VI. (Environmental Factors Potentially Affected).

3 (d). Conclusion: Less Than Significant Impact.

At present, Monterey County is in attainment for all federal air quality standards and state standards for Carbon monoxide (CO), Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). However, Monterey County is designated as “non-attainment-transitional” for [Ozone \(O₃\) and the 8 hour State standards for](#) respirable particulates (PM₁₀) for the state 2-hour ozone standard. Although the project would include one-time, limited grading activities, the potential air emissions meet the standard for pollutants and the project would not create a situation where it adds a considerable cumulative net increase of any criteria pollutant. Therefore, as noted by CEQA, air emissions would be less than significant for PM₁₀ due to the non-attainment designation.

The proposed construction would be contained within less than an acre – approximately 0.146 acre - of the subject property. Therefore, construction and grading activities would operate below the 2.2 acres per day threshold established by the CEQA Air Quality Guidelines “Criteria for Determining Construction Impacts,” (Table 5.2). Furthermore, construction-related air quality impacts would be controlled by implementing Monterey County ~~RMA-HCD~~ standard conditions for erosion control that require watering, erosion control, and dust control. These impacts are considered less than significant based on the foregoing conditions and best management practices incorporated into the project design, thus reducing air quality impacts below the threshold of significance.

The subject property is located within an established rural residential area that includes scattered agricultural activities; tenants within the vicinity of the project site are considered to be the sensitive receptors. Impacts caused by grading would be temporary and a preliminary grading plan has been submitted from which analysis was performed to anticipate the scope of impacts. The grading activity would require export of cut material, approximately ~~106-400~~ cubic yards of soil. The short-term emissions relating to the grading activity are accounted for in the AQMP inventory. Therefore, the project’s temporary construction activities would cause a less than significant impact to construction-related air quality and sensitive receptors.

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES				
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7, 9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7, 9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7, 9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7, 9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7, 9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7, 9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

According to the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB) there are several rare or endangered plant species known to occur in the area of the proposed project. To verify the presence of these plant species, and to address potential impacts to [these species plant and animal species](#), a biological report (LIB160813) was prepared for the proposed grading. The project [proposal](#) site includes removing approximately 10 Coast live oak seedling with a DBH of one (1) inch or less, and two Eucalyptus seedlings with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of approximately one (1) inch. Present within the Limit of Disturbance (LOD) of the project are three (3) plants of special-status from the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB): Hooker’s Manzanita, Pajaro Manzanita, and Eastwood’s golden bush. [These plants are part of a](#)

central maritime chaparral plant community that has naturally established under the power lines and within PG&E's utility easement.

4 (c), (f). Conclusion: No Impact.

Information obtained from the Monterey County Geographic Information System and the North County Land Use Plan does not indicate that the subject property is within an area which supports riparian habitat or marsh and/or vernal pools. The project site is located on the terrace portion of a ridge and ~~is not associated with any riparian habitat, marsh, or vernal pool~~there is no fresh water, brackish water, or saltwater at the site. No adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or any other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan exists for the project site or surrounding area and therefore the subject property would not be restricted by it. Therefore, the project will have no impact to these biological resources.

4 (d). Conclusion: Less Than Significant.

~~As discussed and described above in Section II: Project Description and Environmental Setting, the proposed site does not contain any environmentally sensitive habitat areas as mapped in the North County Land Use Plan. The project site is not within any established native resident or migratory wildlife corridor. Furthermore, the A biological assessment conducted August 2, 2016, and revised February 18, 2018, did not identify any nesting site within the LOD or in the immediate vicinity. Moreover, the study concluded that the site does not offer suitable habitat for special-status wildlife that are documented identified within a five (5) mile radius according to the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB). However, the project is in the vicinity of fragments of Central Maritime Chaparral. This plant community is somewhat compromised because it is not contiguous and is interspersed by non-native trees (Eucalyptus), woodland forest, cleared private land, a dirt road, and agriculture. Only temporary impacts to wildlife in the area would occur (during grading activity). Following grading activity, vegetative habitat will be restored at the site. No physical barriers will or change in use will occur that could impact wildlife movement on the site or in the area long-term. In addition, the site is not within an area that is mapped or identified as a wildlife corridor. The area is surrounded by residential and agricultural uses as well as roads. Therefore there will be a less than significant (temporary) impact on wildlife movements/corridors. The project would not have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on this plant community, any species identified as a candidate, sensitive or special status species other than those identified above or have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community. Any potential impacts would be reduced to Less Than Significant with the implementation of project-specific Conditions of Approval.~~

4 (a), (b), (e). Conclusion: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.

Several small oak trees, maritime chaparral plant communities, and some non-native plants and trees will be impacted by the proposed grading. According to a biological report prepared for the project, the project would involve removal of ~~xx10~~ Coast Live Oak tree seedlings, ~~xx2~~ Eucalyptus tree seedlings, ~~xx28~~ Parjaro Manzanita plants, ~~xx17~~ Hookers Manzanita plants, and ~~xx27~~ Eastwood's golden bush plants, all of which are rare or endangered plant species. Maritime chaparral (the plant community in which the rare/endangered plant species are found) is considered a sensitive biological habitat and impacts to this habitat are addressed within the North County Land Use Plan.

In order to reduce potential impacts to sensitive biological species, the project has been designed to ~~include mitigation measures self-mitigate~~. To the extent feasible, the grading area will be minimized to impact the smallest area necessary to achieve project objectives. The project proposal would remove the upper six (6) inches of ~~top soil~~ topsoil, stockpiling it on a plastic sheet to prevent contamination with weed seeds, and then redistribute ~~ing~~ the soil over the graded area. This topsoil would then be seeded with local native seed stock. For sensitive plant species within the grading area, the project proposes to salvage healthy existing special-status plants and replant a minimum of 180 additional special-status plants ~~20 special-status plants within the within the restored grading site.~~ Where feasible, sensitive plant species will be cut to the ground without disturbing roots to allow for potential resprouting by some special-status species. Seeds from special-status plants within the grading area will also be collected and stored for subsequent sowing in the grading area. ~~area they were removed.~~ For all other plants outside of the grading area, a pre-grading survey within the Limits of Disturbance (LOD) will be conducted to flag for Pajaro Mmanzanita, Hooker's Mmanzanita, and Eastwood's golden bush. F-and flagging any of these plants to will assist construction crews with avoidance in avoiding impacts to plants of disturbing these plants as to the extent feasible. Temporary fencing will be installed outside a five-foot buffer from the canopy edge of any sensitive native plant species, including along the margins of the oak woodland west of the access road adjacent to the LOD which will remain in place for the duration of grading activities in the area. After grading activities are completed, the site will be enhanced and restored with native and special-status plant species as identified in the Habitat Restoration Plan and proposed mitigation measures.

Conditions of aApproval for the project would protect surrounding trees located close to the construction site from construction equipment by fencing off the canopy driplines and/or critical root zones with protective materials. To avoid impacts to nesting bird season, grading activities are proposed to be conducted outside of bird nesting season from February 15 through August 31. However, in the event grading must occur during nesting season, a pre-construction survey for nesting birds will be completed within 14 days of the initial ground disturbance. Any nesting activities identified in the area will be communicated to the PG&E biologist and where feasible, a construction avoidance zone (buffer) from any active bird nests will be established and maintained during construction activities within this timeframe in accordance with PG&E's Nesting Bird Management Plan.

~~Therefore, the project as proposed and designed includes mitigation measure that when implemented would have a less than significant impact on the biological resources identified on the site.~~

A long-term maintenance and monitoring program is required to assess progress on completion of project tasks, to provide quality control, and to hasten implementation of corrective actions as needed. Furthermore, the Biological Assessment has been updated to include Success Criteria and Adaptive Management measures ~~Success Criteria and Active Management.~~ The Success Success Criteria establishes targets for restoration of and enhancement to the Central Maritime Cehaparral. These mitigation efforts include harvesting local seed stock during Fall 2018-2021 and germinating it in an off-site nursery, under the supervision of a trained biologist or ecologist, and then replanting the seedlings in the graded area and within the Limits of Disturbance (LOD). The Suecess-Success Criteria also includes monitoring of the restored site twice a year for

threefor five (35) years, with a summary report documenting the monitoring results. -The restoration areas will be inspected and maintained by a qualified restoration biologist/ecologist at least quarterly during Year 1, and annually in Years 2-5, or as needed to achieve optimum results. Inspection and maintenance frequency will be increased or reduced during the monitoring period at the direction of the restoration biologist/ecologist, and in coordination with HCD-Planning Division. The Site will be maintained in optimal condition for promoting the long-term viability and vigor of all restoration plantings and recolonization by native species. The maintenance and monitoring period is five years in duration or until performance targets of 75 percent survivability rate and presence of invasive species of 10 percent or less are met and will begin immediately after seeding and replanting. There are a minimum of 180 special-status plant species proposed to be replanted at the grading site. At the request of California Native Plant Society, Monterey Bay, 25 bush monkey flower, 25 black sage, and an additional 50 Eastwood's golden bush have been added to the replanting list. The ~~Success~~ Success Criteria includes an Adaptive Management component whereas the monitoring biologist would propose corrective steps to a qualified restoration ecologist so that the restorative goals of restoring temporary disturbance areas to pre-project conditions, restore special-status plants to the site, provide functional habitat value for native plants and animals within the restoration areas, and reduce post-construction erosion and off-site sediment transport are achieved. are met.

Reporting is required for compliance with the restoration plan mitigation measures contained within the restoration plan. Once initial restoration implementation has been completed, an as-built report shall be provided. Following the initial report, yearly activities and monitoring shall be documented in annual reports. The annual reports shall summarize monitoring data collected each succeeding year and compare results against the performance criteria to evaluate restoration success. The annual reports shall include recommended maintenance activities and corrective measures, if needed, and specify when such measures will be implemented. Monitoring and reporting shall be conducted until success criteria are met (up to five years), after which a final report shall be completed.

Therefore, the project as proposed and designed includes measures that when implemented would have a less than significant impact on the biological resources identified on the site.

Mitigation Measure No. 1: Collection of local seed stock.

The applicant shall have a qualified biologist or ecologist collect special -status seedlings and cuttings that will be harvested and salvaged from the project site. The cuttings shall be grown in an off-site nursery, and monitored on a monthly basis until replanted at the site. In addition to the salvaged seedlings and cuttings, the applicant shall have a minimum of 180 special-status seedlings grown at an off-site nursery consisting of 20 Hooker's Manzanita, 30 Pajaro Manzanita, 80 Eastwood's Golden bush, 25 black sage, and 25 bush monkey flower planted under the supervision of the qualified biologist or ecologist at the site following completion of grading activities which are planned to occur during Fall 2021 as identified in the Habitat Restoration Plan (April 2021 and September 2021).

Mitigation Measure Monitoring Action No. 1a: Prior to the issuance of grading permits, the applicant shall provide to HCD-Planning information identifying the nursery or greenhouse where the seed stock is propagated and the name of the biologist or ecologist that will supervise the seed stock germination and replanting efforts.

Mitigation Measure Monitoring Action No. 1b: Prior to final of grading permits, the supervising biologist or ecologist shall provide to HCD-Planning evidence that a minimum of 180 special-status seedlings have been planted at the project site consisting of 20 Hooker's Manzanita, 30 Pajaro Manzanita, 80 Eastwood's Golden bush, 25 black sage, and 25 bush monkey flower.

Mitigation Measure No. 2: Enhancement of local environmental setting

Invasive and non-native plants shall be removed from the grading location and from within the Limits of Disturbance (LOD). Invasive plants/weeds shall be less than 10% of the vegetative cover within the LOD at the conclusion of the 5-year monitoring period. A one-time clearing of non-native and invasive vegetation, spanning 900 linear feet with a 10-foot buffer on each side along the access road between the gate and the project restoration area, shall be performed under the supervision of the project biologist or ecologist. Special-status plant species shall be reintroduced and/or planted at the site, including both planting seedlings germinated in accordance with Mitigation Measure 1, following completion of grading activities and replanting of plants salvaged in accordance with Mitigation Measure 3.

Mitigation Measure Monitoring Action 2a: The supervising biologist or ecologist shall submit to HCD-Planning a summary report at the end of each calendar year that describes the over-all condition of the special-status plants located within the Limits of Disturbance. If success criteria are not met, adaptive management measures described in Mitigation Measure 4 shall be applied.

Mitigation Measure No. 3: Salvage of special-status plant within the LOD.

The applicant shall have a qualified biologist or ecologist supervise the careful removal of any special-status plants with a hand shovel from within the Limits of Disturbance (LOD) that may be at risk from trampling or crushing from grading activities, including the maneuvering of equipment and the stockpiling of supplies or the stockpiling of salvaged special-status plants or top six inches of topsoil. The salvaged plants shall be placed in pots with soil and watered immediately. The salvaged six inches of topsoil shall be stockpiled on a plastic sheet and covered to prevent contamination with weeds. Salvaged special-status plants shall be retained on site for the duration of the grading activities. Once the grading activities are completed, the salvaged plants shall be replanted in the approximate location from which they were removed along with the top six inches of topsoil.

Mitigation Measure Monitoring Action 3a: Prior to final of grading permits, the applicant shall provide photo-documentary evidence of the site as it existed prior to the commencement of the project, staging and containment of salvaged plants during the grading activities, and, once the grading project is completed, installation of any salvaged plants and top six inches of topsoil within the disturbed areas at the site.

Mitigation Measure No. 4: Monitoring and Adaptive Management measures.

Following completion of grading activities, vegetation restoration and enhancement efforts shall be monitored quarterly in the first year and on an annual basis for 4 years thereafter for a minimum of five (5) years. The monitoring shall include observation of the health of the affected special-status plants and quantities of invasive plants within the Limits of Disturbance, documentation of compliance with the success criteria contained in the Habitat Restoration Plan (April 2021 and September 2021), and any corrective measures taken to obtain compliance with

the success criteria. Such information shall be documented in an annual report and submitted for a minimum of five years, or until the success criteria of 75% survivability rate is met, to the HCD Chief of Planning for review and approval.

Mitigation Monitoring Action No. 4a:

The applicant / supervising biologist/ecologist shall provide to HCD-Planning a status report at the conclusion of each calendar year for five consecutive years. The report shall provide written and photographic evidence demonstrating progress of the restoration and enhancement efforts. If the efforts are not meeting the established targets, the consulting biologist/ecologist shall describe corrective actions needed or taken to meet the performance standards. Appropriate corrective actions shall be implemented until success criteria of 75% survivability rate is fully met. The HCD Chief of Planning may extend the five-year monitoring and reporting period if necessary, to ensure achievement with restoration and success criteria.

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in 15064.5? (Source: 1, 3, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to 15064.5? (Source: 1, 3, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? (Source: 1, 3, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? (Source: 1, 3, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

See Section II.A (Project Description), B (Environmental Setting), and Section IV.A (Cultural Resources) above, as well as sources listed.

6. ENERGY	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				

6. ENERGY

<u>Would the project:</u>	<u>Potentially Significant Impact</u>	<u>Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated</u>	<u>Less Than Significant Impact</u>	<u>No Impact</u>
a) <u>Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation? (Source: 1,2, 3, 9)</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) <u>Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency? (Source: 1,2, 3, 9)</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

See Section II.A (Project Description), B (Environmental Setting), and Section IV.A (Environmental Factors Potentially Affected) above, as well as sources listed.

6 (a) and (b) Conclusion: No Impact:

The project proposes grading activities that include the removal, stockpile, and salvage of the top six inches of topsoil from the grading area. Following the grading activity, topsoil will be replaced within the grading area and non-native plants will be removed throughout the LOD. All equipment maneuvering, stockpiling of reserved topsoil and plants, and redistribution will take place within the LOD or the adjacent, disturbed roadway. To complete the work, PG&E will use a rubber tire skid-steer loader and small dump truck (10 cubic yards). The Project will take approximately one week to complete and involves the use of some medium-heavy equipment along with manual labor during the restoration phase. Although some energy will be used for transportation-related activities such as hauling dirt off-site, the amount of energy used would be short-term and have a less than significant impact on the environment. The proposed project is for routine maintenance and restoration of the grading site for an existing transmission line, and therefore would not conflict with or obstruct state or local plan for renewable energy.

67. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

<u>Would the project:</u>	<u>Potentially Significant Impact</u>	<u>Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated</u>	<u>Less Than Significant Impact</u>	<u>No Impact</u>
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? (Source:1, 3, 6, 7, 8) Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

67. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7, 8)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? (Source:1, 3, 6, 7, 8)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides? (Source:1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 8)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? (Source:1, 3, 6, 7, 8)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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? (Source:1, 3, 6, 7, 8)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Chapter 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property? (Source:1, 3, 6, 7, 8)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater? (Source:1, 3, 6, 7, 8)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

The project is sited under existing powerlines on a portion of the landscape that can reach approximately ~~six-seven~~ and one-half (~~6-7~~ 1/2) feet above the surrounding terrain under the power line. The purpose of the project is to remove approximately ~~895-2,855~~ square feet of this feature to increase the vertical clearance between the power-line and ground. This activity and alteration of the ground is required to comply with the Federal vertical clearance standards and to increase public safety. The active San Andreas fault lies about 29 miles northeast of the property.

~~6-7~~ (a), (b), (c), (d), (e): Conclusion: No Impact

The geotechnical investigation and evaluation for the project determined that the site is suitable for the proposed grading (cut); the cut materials would be removed from the site. The results of the study indicate there are no adverse geotechnical hazards (such as liquefaction, landsliding, expansive soils) which would preclude the grading operation of this project or that the proposed grading activities would cause or increase any geotechnical hazards. The project would remove the existing ~~top soil~~ topsoil, set it aside on site, and redistribute it over the disturbed area; there would be no loss of topsoil relating to this project.

~~67~~(b) Conclusion: Less Than Significant Impact:

The project is conditioned such that an erosion control plan must be approved by the RMAHCD-Environmental Services Division prior to the issuance of a grading permit. The plan would include BMPs that would minimize or eliminate potential erosion during grading activities. Additionally, plans submitted and reviewed by the RMAHCD-Planning Division include a restoration plan that would remove the upper six (6) inches of ~~top soil~~ topsoil and later redistribute this ~~top soil~~ topsoil on the disturbed portion resulting from the grading activity. This redistributed topsoil would be replanted with local native seed stock and the salvaged special status plants would be replanted in this area.

78. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment? (Source: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? (Source: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), greenhouse gases (GHG) are gases that trap heat in the atmosphere. U.S. GHG emissions in 2014 consisted of 81% Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), 11% Methane (CH₄), 6% Nitrous Oxide (N₂O), and 3% of fluorinated gases (hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and nitrogen trifluoride). The larger amount of GHG emissions lead to higher concentrations in the atmosphere and each of these gases can remain in the atmosphere for different amounts of time (from a few years to thousands of years). Over time, these gases are mixed resulting in a global effect despite their point of emission. Based on information obtained from the EPA, an increase in GHG emissions are is related to warming of the earth, a process commonly known as the “greenhouse effect” or “global warming.” This process is expected to have an effect in weather patterns, ocean circulation, mean sea level rise, water supply, and an increase in infectious diseases.

The baseline GHG emission for the project site is next to zero and temporary construction activities related to the project would introduce new points of emissions. However, the long-term prospect of the operational components would not contribute to the baseline GHGs. Pursuant to Section 15064.4 of the CEQA Guidelines, Monterey County, as the lead agency, must analyze GHG emissions of the proposed project and reach a conclusion regarding significance of said emissions. Although the State of California has provided guidance to lead agencies, it has yet to develop specific GHG Thresholds of Significance for analysis of projects during environmental review. Furthermore, the Monterey Bay Unified Air Quality Management District (MBUAQMD) has not adopted GHG thresholds to determine significance. The 1982 General Plan does not contain policies that address GHGs. However, it does include policies that relate to climate change such as water conservation; protection of vegetation; building designs incorporating solar orientation, weather proofing, and limiting reliance on artificial

heating, cooling, and lighting; and locating development where adequate road systems exist. In addition to these policies, Chapter 18.11 – Green Building Standards, of the Monterey County Code was adopted to improve public health, safety, and welfare by encouraging responsible use of resources in the design and construction of buildings by using building concepts that would reduce negative impacts, or resulting in a positive environmental impact, by encouraging sustainable construction practices.

Temporary grading activities of the proposed project would be the sole contributor to GHG emissions during the lifetime of this project. Vegetation would be removed to accomplish this project, however, the top six inches of ~~top soil~~topsoil would be retained and reapplied to the disturbed area, and replanted with native seed stock so as to revegetate the disturbed area. However, quantifying project emissions at this time would be too speculative. Therefore, in lieu of State guidance or locally adopted thresholds, a primarily qualitative approach was used to evaluate possible impacts from the proposed project.

7-8(a) (b). Conclusion: Less than Significant Impact.

Grading activities involving medium-duty equipment and vehicle use associated with this project would be temporary; therefore, GHG emissions would be limited to a one (1) week time span. Operational elements of the project would not increase the baseline amount of GHGs emitted prior to implementation of the project. In other words, grading to increase the vertical distance between the ground and the powerlines above would not induce a ~~permanent~~permeant increase of vehicle trips over what is existing or cause an increase in the emission of carbon dioxide (CO₂) by fuel combustion. Therefore, the project would have a less than significant impact as it relates to GHGs. (Source: IX.-5)

89. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS			Less Than Significant		
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

89. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation: No Impact

See Section II.A (Project Description), C (Environmental Setting), and Section IV.A (Environmental Factors Potentially Affected) above, as well as sources listed.

910. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

910. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 <u>erosion</u> or <u>siltation</u> on- or off-site? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in <u>flooding</u> on- or off-site? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation: No Impact

See Section II.A (Project Description), B (Environmental Setting), and Section IV.A (Environmental Factors Potentially Affected) above, as well as sources listed.

1011. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation: No Impact

See Section II.A (Project Description), B (Environmental Setting), and Section IV.A (Environmental Factors Potentially Affected) above, as well as sources listed.

1012. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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? (Source: 1, 2, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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? (Source: 1, 2, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation: No Impact

See Section II.A (Project Description), B (Environmental Setting), and Section IV.A (Environmental Factors Potentially Affected) above, as well as sources listed.

1213. NOISE

Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

The project is limited to grading activities of approximately ~~106,400~~ cubic yards of cut, covering approximately ~~895-2,855~~ square feet of area with a Limit of Disturbance of approximately ~~5,164,042~~ square feet. The subject property is located within an established rural residential area with intermittent agricultural uses in the vicinity and noise generated by the proposed project may potentially impact nearby sensitive receptors. However, these impacts would be temporary.

12-13 (a), (c), (e), (f). Conclusion: No Impact. The proposed project would not create any permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on permanent ambient noise levels. The project site is not located within an airport land use plan nor is it within the vicinity of a private airstrip. Furthermore, the project does not include any structural development or include uses that require prolonged on-site human activity. Therefore, the project would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels and thus would have no impact.

12-13 (b) and (d). Conclusion: Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project includes grading to increase the vertical clearance between the ground and the powerlines above. The grading is localized and the entirety of the project, including vegetative restoration, encompasses approximately 5,1646,042 square feet. Therefore, the proposed project may cause a temporary increase in ambient noise levels as it would expose persons to or generation of excessive groundborne/ground borne noise levels within the project vicinity due to grading operations. All development activities would be required to adhere to the County's Noise Control Ordinance (Chapter 10.60 of the Monterey County Code). Based on the temporary nature of the grading activities, the project would have a less than significant impact on the ambient noise levels of the neighborhood. (Source: IX.-1)

1314. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Conclusion: No Impact.

See Section II.A (Project Description), B (Environmental Setting), and Section IV.A (Environmental Factors Potentially Affected) above, as well as sources listed.

1415. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
a) Fire protection? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1415. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project result in:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b)	Police protection? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c)	Schools? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d)	Parks? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e)	Other public facilities? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Conclusion: No Impact.

See Section II.A (Project Description), B (Environmental Setting), and Section IV.A (Environmental Factors Potentially Affected) above, as well as sources listed.

1516. RECREATION

Would the project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Conclusion: No Impact.

See Section II.A (Project Description), B (Environmental Setting), and Section IV.A (Environmental Factors Potentially Affected) above, as well as sources listed.

1617. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit? (Source: 1, 2, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with the goals, objectives, and policies of the 2010 Regional Transportation Plan for Monterey County, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) for designated roads or highways? (Source: 1, 2, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that result in substantial safety risks? (Source: 1, 2, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)? (Source: 1, 2, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in inadequate emergency access? (Source: 1, 2, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities? (Source: 1, 2, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Conclusion: No Impact.

See Section II.A (Project Description), B (Environmental Setting), and Section IV.A (Environmental Factors Potentially Affected) above, as well as sources listed.

1718. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k); or (Source: 1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe. (Source: 1, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Conclusion: No Impact.

See Section II.A (Project Description), B (Environmental Setting), and Section IV.A (Environmental Factors Potentially Affected) above, as well as sources listed.

1819. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1819. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste? (Source: 1, 3, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

See Section II.A (Project Description), B (Environmental Setting), and Section IV.A (Environmental Factors Potentially Affected) above, as well as sources listed.

20. WILDFIRE

<u>If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:</u>	<u>Potentially Significant Impact</u>	<u>Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated</u>	<u>Less Than Significant Impact</u>	<u>No Impact</u>
a) <u>Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 & 9)</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) <u>Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 & 9)</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) <u>Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 & 9)</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

20. WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

<u>Potentially Significant Impact</u>	<u>Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated</u>	<u>Less Than Significant Impact</u>	<u>No Impact</u>
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d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 & 9)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

See Section II.A (Project Description), B (Environmental Setting), and Section IV.A (Environmental Factors Potentially Affected) above, as well as sources listed.

20 (a)(b)(c) and (d):

According to the Monterey County GIS database, the proposed grading and restoration project is located within a very high fire zone. The purpose of the grading work involved in the project is to increase the vertical clearance between the ground and the existing transmission lines to ensure public safety, increase reliability, and meet Federal safety guidelines that help to prevent wildfires created by power lines sparking into surrounding vegetation. The existing ground clearance is currently 30 feet. The Federal minimum clearance is 36 feet, 4 inches. This project will create a 40-foot to ensure adequate ground clearance. PG&E is proposing to restore the native vegetation in the disturbed areas following grading activities to prevent future erosion occurring at the project site. With restoration, the project balances fire fuel management with the long-term maintenance of native plants and plant communities. There is no proposed development associated with the purpose of this project.

VII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

NOTE: If there are significant environmental impacts which cannot be mitigated and no feasible project alternatives are available, then complete the mandatory findings of significance and attach to this initial study as an appendix. This is the first step for starting the environmental impact report (EIR) process.

Does the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) 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? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? (Source: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Conclusion: No Impact.

The proposed project would have no impacts on Aesthetics, Agriculture and Forest Resources, Cultural Resources, Energy, Geologic/Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology/Water, Land Use/Planning, Mineral Resources, Population/Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation/Traffic, Tribal Cultural resources, ~~or~~ Utilities/Service Systems or Wildfires.

Less than significant impacts have been identified for Air Quality, Biological Resources, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Noise; conditions of approval have been incorporated to ensure compliance with County requirements, therefore reducing potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

(a). Conclusion: Less Than Significant with Mitigation. Based upon the analysis throughout this Initial Study, the proposed project, as designed and conditions would ~~not have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment~~ minimize and mitigate impacts to, ~~threaten to eliminate a plant~~ community ~~communities,~~ reduce the number or restrict the range of ~~aand~~ rare or

endangered plants or animals or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California prehistory. The project includes mitigation measures such as preserving the topsoil associated within the area of grading and redistributing this soil over the disturbed area and reseeded the topsoil with local-sourced seed stock, salvaging and replanting vegetation directly affected by grading, and the protection of vegetation outside of the grading limits. Special-status plants are often found within Maritime chaparral. However, this habitat is fractured, due largely to the agricultural uses in the area, and corrupted with other plants that are not associated with this habitat. These impacts are less than significant and not cumulatively considerable in part because of the limited scope of the project – an area of grading of approximately 895-2,855 square feet – and with the retention and redistribution of the topsoil over the grading cut will temporarily impact biological communities but those communities will be restored and enhanced following the project. The cut material would be exported. Construction activities for the proposed project may create temporary impacts to air quality, biological resources, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise. However, these impacts are one-time, temporary impacts associated with the grading activities and would not be recurring over the life of the completed project. Furthermore, conditions of approval are project-specific and would ensure that State and County environmental policies and standards are incorporated into the project. See previous Sections II. B (Project Description) and C (Environmental Setting) and Section IV. A (Environmental Factors Potentially Affected) as well as the sources referenced.

(b) & (c). Conclusion: No Impact. The project would involve grading on a localized area to increase vertical clearance between the ground and powerlines above to enhance public safety; therefore, the project would not create a substantial adverse effect on human beings, either directly or indirectly. Implementation of the proposed project would result in temporary minor incremental reductions in air quality in the project vicinity but would not produce cumulative long-term impacts to air quality and would not change traffic conditions in the area or region. The incremental air quality, transportation/traffic, and public services impacts of the project, when considered in combination with the effects of past projects, current projects, and probable future projects in the planning area, would result in no impact.

Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) performs routine maintenance along gas and electrical transmission lines to address performance and safety issues. Although these projects have the potential to cause cumulative impacts. Such impacts should be addressed comprehensively by PG&E through the California Public Utilities Commission for state-wide contaminations. Monterey County's responsibility and contributions towards cumulative effects are geographically limited. ; it is important to consider the purpose, type, and geographical significance of each project. Currently, there is a PG&E application to remove 137 oaks, eucalyptus, pines and toyon trees and approximately 936 square feet of oak brush from two gas transmission line rights-of-ways, which are referred to as gas line projects. This gas line project is unrelated to the proposed grading and restoration project because they are not similar in purpose, type, or location. Each type of PG&E project addresses a different utility safety concern. The purpose of the proposed grading project will increase the vertical clearance between the ground and the existing transmission lines to ensure public safety, increase reliability, and meet Federal safety guidelines that help to prevent wildfires created by power lines sparking into surrounding vegetation. The purpose of the gas line project is to clear vegetation with roots that could threaten the operating integrity of two existing gas transmission lines. The proposed grading project is located in a discrete area approximately two miles east of

the Elkhorn Slough, between Strawberry Canyon Road and Tucker Road in Northern Monterey County, on private property with no public access. The gas line projects are located in a corridor approximately 1¾ miles long between Serape Court and San Miguel Canyon Road in Prunedale. The gas line projects are over 1½ miles from the grading project's location at its closest point. The two projects have no visual, hydrological, biological or other connection to each other. When considering cumulative impacts of both these ~~two~~ maintenance activities ~~given the type, purpose, and location of each project, they are considered unrelated and would not result in long-term impacts~~—are intended to avoid significant long-term environmental impacts from wildfires or gas line failures which can include loss of life and structures. Within Monterey County, impacts of PG&E maintenance projects are not considered cumulatively considerable since each project has unique geographic vegetative concerns and each project is designed and mitigated to avoid, minimize, or restore impacts to the extent feasible.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21083.05, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 65088.4, Gov. Code; Sections 21080(c), 21080.1, 21080.3, 21082.1, 21083, 21083.05, 21083.3, 21093, 21094, 21095, and 21151, Public Resources Code; *Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino*, (1988) 202 Cal.App.3d 296; *Leonoff v. Monterey Board of Supervisors* (1990) 222 Cal.App.3d 1337; *Eureka Citizens for Responsible Govt. v. City of Eureka* (2007) 147 Cal.App.4th 357; *Protect the Historic Amador Waterways v. Amador Water Agency* (2004) 116 Cal.App.4th at 1109; *San Franciscans Upholding the Downtown Plan v. City and County of San Francisco* (2002) 102 Cal.App.4th 656.

VIII. CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FEES

Assessment of Fee:

The State Legislature, through the enactment of Senate Bill (SB) 1535, revoked the authority of lead agencies to determine that a project subject to CEQA review had a “de minimis” (minimal) effect on fish and wildlife resources under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Projects that were determined to have a “de minimis” effect were exempt from payment of the filing fees.

SB 1535 has eliminated the provision for a determination of “de minimis” effect by the lead agency; consequently, all land development projects that are subject to environmental review are now subject to the filing fees, unless the California Department of Fish and Wildlife determines that the project will have no effect on fish and wildlife resources.

To be considered for determination of “no effect” on fish and wildlife resources, development applicants must submit a form requesting such determination to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. A No Effect Determination form may be obtained by contacting the Department by telephone at (916) 653-4875 or through the Department’s website at www.wildlife.ca.gov.

Conclusion: The project will be required to pay the fee.

Evidence: Based on the record as a whole as embodied in the [RMAHCD-Planning Division](#) files pertaining to PLN160131 and the attached Initial Study.

IX. REFERENCES

1. Project Application and Plans submitted for RMAHCD-Planning Division File No. PLN160131
2. Monterey County 1982 General Plan
3. North County Land Use Plan/Coastal Implementation Plan Part 2
4. Title 20 of the Monterey County Code (Zoning Ordinance)
5. CEQA Air Quality Guidelines, Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, Revised February 2008 and 2012-2015 2009-2011 Triennial Plan Revision
6. Site Visit conducted by the project planners on February 27, 20182018, and June 19, 2018.
7. Monterey County Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
8. Geotechnical Investigation Report by Krazan & Associates, Inc. dated October 11, 2016 (Monterey County Library File No. LIB180189)
9. Biological Assessment by Arcadis U.S., Inc. dated August 2, 2016 (Monterey County Library File No. LIB160813, and Habitat Restoration Plan (April 2021 and September 2021))