

**Pacific Gas and Electric Company's
Lincoln-Pleasant Grove 115 kV Reconductoring Project**

Initial Study / Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Placer County, California

February 2011

Prepared For:

The Central Valley Regional
Water Quality Control Board
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1.0 Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Project Name: Lincoln-Pleasant Grove 115 kV Reconductoring Project

Project Proponent: Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E)
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Project Location: The proposed Lincoln-Pleasant Grove 115 kV Reconductoring Project replaces approximately seven miles of an existing power line that originates near Lincoln Substation on Gladding Road in Placer County, extends westward along Gladding Road to State Route 65, runs southeasterly for approximately 600 feet, crosses over State Route 65 in a southwesterly direction to 9th Street, follows 9th Street to O street, and then runs south along O Street to Auburn Ravine. The line crosses over Auburn Ravine to connect with Moore Road, and continues west along Moore Road to Danby Court. At Danby Court the line turns south, crosses the State Route 65 bypass, currently under construction, and then follows the historic alignment of Ingram Slough and the existing bike path southward to the Orchard Creek Conservation Bank. Leaving the City of Lincoln and traversing an unincorporated portion of Placer County, the line continues due south to the Thunder Valley Casino, and then turns east along Athens Avenue to Industrial Avenue. The last portion of the line continues southward along the Industrial Avenue/Union Pacific Railway corridor to Pleasant Grove Substation.

Project Description: In order to maintain service reliability and meet increasing electric load demands in the City of Lincoln and surrounding area, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) proposes to replace approximately seven miles of 115 kV power line between Lincoln Substation and Pleasant Grove Substation. This project and other work being undertaken by PG&E in the area will minimize the potential for future power demand overloads and ensure service reliability to the City of Lincoln and southwest Placer County. As part of this project, PG&E proposes to replace many of the existing wooden power poles with a combination of wood and fiberglass poles, and one tubular steel pole. The project route uses existing rights-of-way, largely along public roads. The project is located within or alongside areas with land uses which include industrial, residential, recreational, and natural resource protection. The project is scheduled to begin construction in March 2011 and be completed within four months

Finding: The Initial Study describes potential environmental impacts and their significance. In keeping with Section 21080(C)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines, this Initial Study concludes that, with incorporation of the applicant-proposed measures included in the project description, and the specified mitigation measures, the proposed project will not result in significant impacts to the environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The project design incorporates applicant proposed and mitigation measures to minimize impacts to environmental resources. Consequently, as indicated by the checklist on the following pages, only the environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project to an extent involving at least one impact that is "less than significant with mitigation incorporated."

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

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

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.

Signature

Date

2.0 Introduction

This Initial Study (IS) has been prepared to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and addresses the potential environmental impacts associated with installing approximately seven miles of 115 kV power line and associated replacement power poles between PG&E's Lincoln Substation and Pleasant Grove Substation (Figure 2-1).

This IS has been prepared in accordance with CEQA, Public Resources Code 21000 et seq., and the State CEQA Guidelines, Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) 15000 et seq. An IS is prepared by a lead agency to determine if a project may have a significant effect on the environment. This IS relies on expert opinion based on facts, technical studies, and other substantial evidence to document its findings.

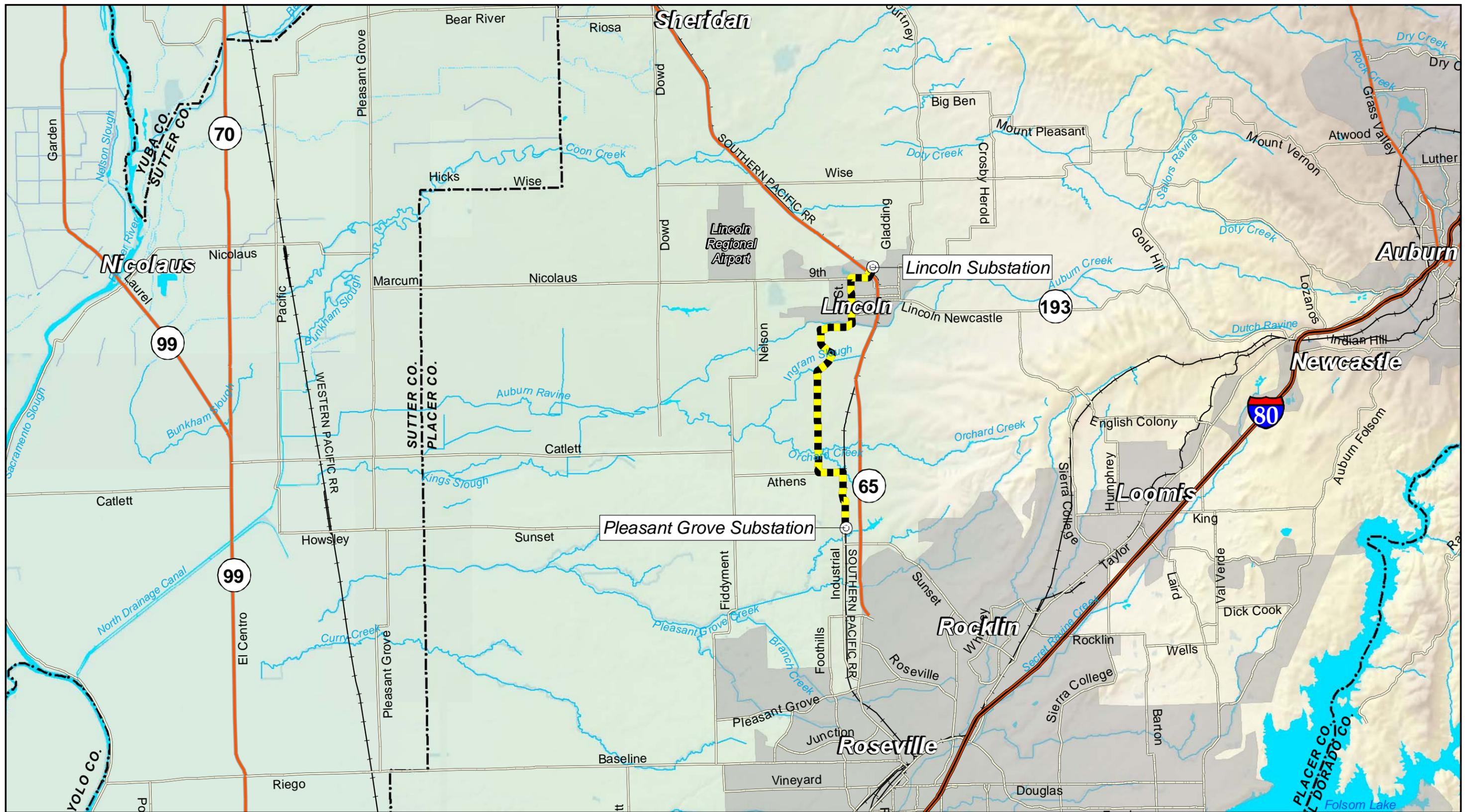
2.1. Lead Agency

The lead agency for CEQA review of the proposed project is the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB).

2.2. Document Organization

This document has been organized to address all of the required content for a negative declaration and initial study, in keeping with Sections 15063 and 15071 of the CEQA Guidelines. This document is organized as follows:

- 1.0 Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration
- 2.0 Introduction
- 3.0 Project Description
- 4.0 Initial Study
- 5.0 Document Preparers
- 6.0 References



- | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| ⊙ Substations | — Interstate | - - - County boundary |
| ▬ Lincoln-Placerville line | — Highway | — Perennial Stream |
| ■ Urban area | — Major Road | — Intermittent Stream |
| | — Railroad | — Intermittent Canal |

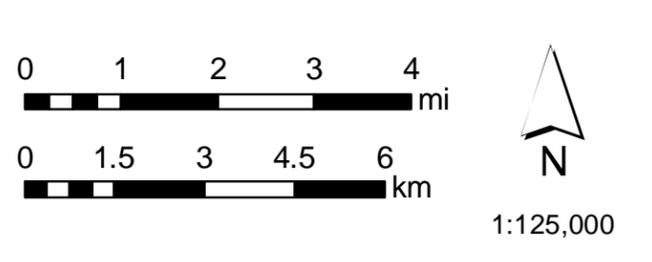


Figure 2-1
Project Location Map
Lincoln-Placerville
115 kV Reconductoring Project

Placer County, California
 January 2011

3.0 Project Description

PG&E proposes to reductor (replace existing conductors with new conductors) the existing Lincoln-Pleasant Grove 60 kV power line between Lincoln Substation, in the City of Lincoln, and Pleasant Grove Substation, west of the City of Rocklin—a distance of approximately seven miles. PG&E owns and operates the existing line, which is located in the City of Lincoln and unincorporated portions of Placer County. The Lincoln-Pleasant Grove 115 kV Reconductoring Project consists of replacing 95 existing wood poles with new wood or fiberglass poles, and one tubular steel pole (TSP) -- and installing two additional new wood or fiberglass poles (for a total of 97). The replacement conductor installed will be suitable for 115 kV operation. The line would be built to 115 kV standards (which is now the PG&E standard for all 60 kV lines) for conversion to, and operation at, 115 kV. The project will be engineered and constructed pursuant to applicable engineering guidelines and standards (e.g., California Public Utilities Commission General Order Number 95).

Reconductoring the existing Lincoln-Pleasant Grove 60 kV power line will avoid impacts that would be expected to occur with development of a new power line route. Working with reviewing agencies, PG&E has also incorporated numerous project modifications to avoid and minimize potential impacts to vernal pool species, wetlands, and aesthetic resources. The approximate proposed pole locations incorporate the recommendations of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and are shown in Appendix A. PG&E has also incorporated a series of applicant proposed measures and mitigation measures to address potential project-related impacts; these are described in Section 3.6 below.

3.1. Purpose and Need

The Lincoln-Pleasant Grove 115 kV Reconductoring Project is needed to improve electric reliability and capacity in southwestern Placer County, and to provide safe and reliable electric service to customers in the City of Lincoln and surrounding area. The City of Lincoln has experienced rapid economic growth and population increases in the past 10 years, with the population increasing from 9,605 in 1999 to 40,060 residents in 2009. This approximately 317 percent population increase made the City of Lincoln the fastest growing city in Placer County during this period (Center for Strategic Economic Research 2010). This growth has created the need for increased power reliability. The projected population associated with ultimate build-out of the City by 2020 is approximately 60,000.

PG&E's electric transmission system serving the City of Lincoln and surrounding communities is comprised largely of 60 kV networks and facilities. With the increased electric demand in the Lincoln area, increased capacity is needed to provide safe and reliable service to PG&E customers. PG&E predicts that it will not be able to sustain reliable electric service in the area if the capacity improvements proposed by the Lincoln-Pleasant Grove 115 kV Reconductoring Project are not made to the system. The new conductor installed as part of the Lincoln-Pleasant Grove 115 kV Reconductoring Project will enable an increase in the existing voltage rating of the lines and will minimize potential power demand overloads.

3.2. Project Location

The proposed project is located in western Placer County (Lincoln and Roseville U. S. Geological Survey 7.5 Minute Quadrangles; USGS 1981 and 1992). The project originates at the north end of the City of Lincoln, west of Lincoln Substation near the intersection of Gladding Road and State

Route 65 (Pole 149), runs southeasterly for approximately 600 feet, crosses over State Route 65 in a southwesterly direction to 9th Street, follows 9th Street to O street, and then runs south along O Street to Auburn Ravine. From there, the line crosses over Auburn Ravine to connect with Moore Road, and continues west along Moore Road to Danby Court. At Danby Court the line turns south; crosses the State Route 65 bypass (currently under construction) and then follows the historic alignment of Ingram Slough and the existing bike path southward to the Orchard Creek Conservation Bank. Leaving the City of Lincoln, and traversing an unincorporated portion of Placer County, the line continues due south to the Thunder Valley Casino, and then turns east along Athens Avenue to Industrial Avenue. The last portion of the line continues southward along the Industrial Avenue/Union Pacific Railway corridor to Pleasant Grove Substation.

3.3. Proposed Construction

Construction activities associated with the power line reconductoring project include excavation of holes, pouring of a concrete foundation for one tubular steel pole (TSP), erection of the tubular steel pole and its cross-arms, erection of direct-buried wood or fiberglass poles, installation of travelers and sockline to facilitate conductor pulling, and conductor stringing, clipping, sagging and dead-ending. Work is fairly site-specific, taking place mainly at the pole locations, with minimal work between spans. All applicable regulations and restrictions will be determined and complied with prior to and during construction. The proposed construction activities are depicted on maps included in Appendix A.

3.3.1. Project Equipment/Vehicles

Equipment that may be used during project construction includes: line trucks, bucket trucks, mechanics' trucks, water trucks, four-wheel-drive pick-ups, 70-ton crane, rope trucks for reconductoring, truck-mounted rope puller and auger trucks, backhoes, dump trucks, tensioner trucks and conductor reel trailers, backhoes, passenger vehicles, and hand tools. Helicopters may also be used to stage personnel and equipment at two locations: northwest of Benvenuto Place near Pole 86 and just north of the Thunder Valley Casino parking area near Pole 44 (see attached maps 6 and 9 in Appendix A).

3.3.2. Project Access

The main travel routes that will be used for construction access include 9th Street, O Street, 1st Street, Joiner Parkway, Athens Avenue, and Industrial Avenue. Streets and roads perpendicular and adjacent to these main roads will also be used, including Moore Road. Additional access will be along the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way or on existing dirt roads. No new roads will be required. Short-duration traffic control and small-segment lane closures may occur along 9th Street (which becomes Nicolaus Road at its west end), Athens Avenue, and O Street. PG&E will consult with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the City of Lincoln, and secure any required approvals prior to any construction activities within roadways. To gain access between poles 47 and 68 on the north side of Orchard Creek, PG&E proposes to install a temporary bridge adjacent to the existing rail car bridge over Orchard Creek (which is not sufficient for the transport of heavy equipment). This temporary bridge will be used during reconductoring and removed following work completion. This will allow crews to access sites via Athens Avenue, which runs along the south side of the Thunder Valley Casino Property. The proposed temporary bridge will be placed east of the existing bridge and will span Orchard Creek. The temporary bridge placement will not require modification of the banks of Orchard Creek or any vegetation removal or trimming.

3.3.3. Project Work, Staging, and Lay-down Areas

The primary staging area for equipment, materials, and other supplies required to construct the project will be off site at an existing PG&E yard at Pleasant Grove Substation. In some cases, materials and/or equipment may be stored on the right-of-way for short periods of time. The primary staging area will also serve as a parking location for personal vehicles and construction vehicles. Placement of the poles and installation of the conductors will take place with equipment staged on the edges of roadways, on gravel adjacent to roadways, bike paths, and on the access roads both through the Orchard Creek Conservation Bank and adjacent to the railroad track parallel to Industrial Avenue. Some equipment will be staged using helicopters at two designated helicopter landing zones in disturbed upland areas within or adjacent to the existing easement and existing dirt roads. The northernmost helicopter landing zone is northwest of Benvenuto Place near Pole 86; the southernmost helicopter landing zone is just north of the Thunder Valley Casino parking area near Pole 44 (see attached maps 6 and 9 in Appendix A).

3.3.4. Pull/Tension Work Areas

With the exception of pull sites along Industrial Avenue and near Auburn Ravine Park, work at conductor pull and tension areas will take place with equipment staged on existing roads and paved surfaces, and — in several instances — on disturbed upland areas immediately adjacent to existing paved and dirt roads (see Appendix A maps). Five of the pull sites along Industrial Avenue will use previously disturbed grassland areas. The pull site just west of the northernmost border of Auburn Ravine Park at Pole 109 will be located to the extent possible on portions of the existing bicycle-pedestrian path, and along an access corridor previously used to access this pole. No additional areas will be disturbed for staging or line pulling activities.

3.3.5. Pole Replacement

The project will require the installation of two additional new poles, and replacement of 95 existing wood poles. With the exception of one TSP, these poles will be new, direct-buried wood or fiberglass poles. The new wood or fiberglass poles will be installed using a utility line truck, which will auger holes and set poles. Excavation holes for wood and fiberglass poles will be approximately 3 feet in diameter and up to 15.5 feet deep. To install the self-supporting TSP on base plates and concrete foundation, heavy equipment will be used to dig a foundation hole (approximately 7 feet wide and 25 feet deep). Following installation of new poles, PG&E will remove existing wood poles either by cutting the poles at ground level or by completely removing the poles from the ground. Pole removal operations will be performed using similar equipment as that used for pole installations. For existing poles that will be completely removed from the ground, holes will be backfilled with native soil and recontoured to be consistent with the existing grade.

3.3.6. Crossing Guard Structures

Crossing guard structures will be installed at all road, railroad, and other aerial utility crossings along the project alignment to prevent injury or damage if the conductor were to inadvertently fall. These structures typically consist of paired, single Y-configured pole structures, or paired wood poles with cross bracing designed to catch falling conductor; a network of cables and netting may also be tied into these poles. A line truck will be used to auger and set the required number of wooden poles on each side of a crossing. These structures will be installed along roadsides in disturbed areas and will cause relatively little disturbance. Crossing guard structures will be installed from paved roads whenever possible. In some instances, boom vehicles/equipment may be used instead of utility

poles to catch any conductor that may potentially fall. Following reconductoring activities, crossing structure poles will be removed, the holes backfilled, and the disturbed areas recontoured and reseeded with native and/or prescribed seed mix as necessary. Near sensitive areas, environmental monitors will coordinate with ground crews to determine appropriate placement of crossing guard structure poles. Features to be avoided will be flagged. If sensitive areas cannot be avoided, temporary footings may be used to hold the crossing structure poles in place instead of augering holes.

3.3.7. Line Installation

The existing conductor will be placed in a hoist, and attached at one end to a temporary pole to support the down strain load, hence removing load on the existing insulator strings. Existing insulators will be removed and new insulators installed, along with conductor rollers. Rollers and insulators will be transported by truck to each pole.

With the roller in place, the hoist will lower the existing conductor from the insulators onto the roller. When all rollers have been installed in a given section of the pole line and the existing conductor moved to them, a cable will be attached from the “puller” truck to one end of the conductor; new conductor will be attached to the existing conductor at the opposite end of the “pull” section, and the conductor replacement process will begin. Once the new conductor is in place, crews will sag the new conductor, clip it into the new insulators, and remove the rollers from the section.

3.4. Project Schedule

Construction is scheduled to begin March 2011, and to be completed in approximately four months. It is critical to keep to the project schedule to ensure load demands are met for peak loads during the summer of 2011.

3.5. Permits and Authorizations

A Water Quality Certificate (Section 401, Clean Water Act) will be issued by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CEQA Lead Agency); this is a discretionary permit, and compliance with CEQA is required. Although the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has primary discretionary permitting authority over utility construction projects, this project qualifies for an exemption from the CPUC’s formal permitting requirements under the CPUC’s General Order (GO) 131-D. Because the proposed bridge placement will not substantially alter the bed, bank, channel or associated vegetation at Orchard Creek, a California Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Agreement is not required for this project.

Although no other discretionary state permits are required, the project will require a Nationwide 12 Permit from the ACOE and Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation with the USFWS. In addition, ministerial permits or authorizations may be required from agencies as shown in Table 3-1, below.

Table 3-1 Ministerial Authorizations That May Be Required

Agency Name	Type of Review
Caltrans	Encroachment permit
State Water Resources Control Board	General Permit for Storm Water Discharges associated with Construction Activity Permit Number CAS000002
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board	General Order for Dewatering and Other Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters
Placer County	Encroachment permit
City of Lincoln	Encroachment permit

3.6. Applicant Proposed and Mitigation Measures

Section 21080(C)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines provides for the adoption of a negative declaration when (A) revisions in the project plans or proposals made by, or agreed to by, the applicant before the proposed negative declaration and initial study are released for public review would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effect on the environment would occur, and (B) there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the lead agency, that the project, as revised, may have a significant effect on the environment.

In keeping with Section 21080(C)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines, PG&E has adopted the following applicant proposed measures (APMs) as part of the project. These measures include PG&E standard construction practices as well as those measures that are proposed to comply with applicable regulations. These measures are incorporated into the proposed project and will be implemented with the project elements described above. In addition, three mitigation measures (MMs) are specified below. With these APMs and mitigation measures incorporated, no significant impacts will result from construction and operation of this project.

APM-AQ-01 Fugitive Dust Controls. The intent of the following measures is to ensure adequate dust control during project construction. Fugitive dust controls will minimize the potential for violations of the Placer County APCD Rule 202 (Visible Emissions) and Rule 205 (Nuisance). The following measures will be employed to prevent and control dust emissions:

- On-site vehicles will be limited to 15 miles per hour to minimize dust emissions on unpaved roads.
- Dust control measures as specified in the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be implemented during construction to address dust on unpaved roads, covering stock piles, and tracking soil onto public roadways.

APM-AQ-02 Construction Equipment Exhaust Reductions. During construction, PG&E will comply with the California Air Resources Control Board’s (CARB) rule on idling, as described in Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations (Section 2485). This rule prohibits, with some exceptions,

the idling of diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicles for more than five minutes, and applies to both trucks and buses greater than 10,000 lbs gross vehicle weight. In addition, PG&E will minimize unnecessary idling time through application of a “common sense” approach to vehicle use. If a vehicle is not required immediately or continuously for construction activities, its engine will be shut off. Construction foremen will include briefings to crews on vehicle use as part of pre-construction conferences.

PG&E will also minimize construction equipment exhaust by using low-emission or electric construction equipment where feasible. Portable diesel-fueled construction equipment with engines 50 hp or larger, and manufactured in 2000 or later, will be registered under the California Air Resources Board Statewide Portable Equipment Registration Program, or will meet a minimum U.S. EPA/CARB Tier 1 engine standards.

APM-AQ-03 Carpooling. PG&E will encourage construction workers to carpool to the job site to the extent practicable.

APM-AQ-04 Recycling. PG&E will encourage the recycling of construction waste where feasible.

APM-AQ-05 Minimize Welding. PG&E will minimize welding and cutting by using compression of mechanical applications where practical and within standards.

MM-BIO-01 Federally Listed Species. The USFWS has reviewed this project, and will issue an opinion that the project, as proposed, is not likely to adversely affect vernal pool crustaceans. PG&E will comply with the terms and conditions of the programmatic consultation and has incorporated the avoidance and minimization measures below into the project. These measures will be implemented within 250 feet of vernal pool habitat potentially supporting vernal pool fairy shrimp and vernal pool tadpole shrimp to avoid or minimize direct and indirect impacts to these species and their habitat.

1. To avoid affecting vernal pool crustaceans, all replacement poles installed within 100 feet of vernal pool crustacean habitat will be fiberglass (to avoid contamination that could otherwise occur if PCP-treated wooden poles were used).
2. Construction activities and access adjacent to vernal pool crustacean habitat will be limited to specifically identified access routes, and construction limits will be fenced or flagged prior to construction by a qualified biologist. Ground disturbance will be limited to the minimum amount necessary to complete the project.
3. A spill control and response plan will be developed for all hazardous materials, including fuels, solvents, and grease (these measures will be included in the SWPPP).
4. Construction activities within 250 feet of suitable habitat will be monitored by a qualified biologist.
5. All construction activity within 250 feet of vernal pool crustacean habitat will occur during the dry season (approximately May 1 – October 1) when vernal pools and swales are dry.
6. A qualified biologist will provide environmental awareness training to all construction personnel prior to construction, including a briefing on the need to minimize impacts to federally-listed species and their habitat.
7. Erosion control measures will be implemented for each area of disturbance, as specified in the project SWPPP.

8. Fiberglass construction mats will be placed over all vernal pools and vernal swales that will be affected by construction access and pole installation.
9. Following construction, all areas within 250 feet of vernal pool crustacean habitat will be restored to pre-project conditions.

Further, because this project will require the placement of Pole 017 in a vernal pool, resulting in a permanent loss of 0.0002 acre of suitable habitat, pursuant to the *Programmatic Formal Endangered Species Act Consultation on Issuance of 404 Permits for Projects with Relatively Small Effects on Listed Vernal Pool Crustaceans Within the Jurisdiction of the Sacramento Field Office, California* ("PBO")(USFWS 1996), PG&E will purchase vernal pool preservation credits at a ratio of 2:1, and vernal pool creation credits at a ratio of 1:1. PG&E has worked extensively with the USFWS to design the project such that the project as proposed (which includes APMs) would have, at most, less-than-significant impacts with incorporation of mitigation.

MM-BIO-02 State Listed Species: Nesting Swainson's Hawk. In consultation with the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), PG&E has adopted the following standard measures to address potential impacts to Swainson's hawk. While previous surveys have not identified nesting Swainson's hawks within the project area, protocols related to nest trees are presented here as a contingency, in the event that nesting Swainson's hawks are discovered during preconstruction surveys.

A pre-construction raptor nest survey shall be conducted within 30 days prior to the beginning of construction activities by a CDFG approved biologist in order to identify any active nests in the project site vicinity. The results of the survey shall be submitted to CDFG. If active nests are found, a quarter-mile (1,320 feet) initial temporary nest disturbance buffer around each such nest site shall be established. If project related activities within the temporary nest disturbance buffer are determined to be necessary during the nesting season, then an on-site biologist/monitor, experienced with raptor behavior, shall be retained to monitor the nest, and shall, together with the PG&E staff biologist, consult with CDFG to determine the best course of action necessary to avoid nest abandonment or take of individuals. Work may be allowed to proceed within the temporary nest disturbance buffer if raptors are not exhibiting agitated behavior, such as defensive flights at intruders, getting up from a brooding position, or flying off the nest. The designated on-site biologist/monitor shall be on-site daily while construction related activities are taking place and shall have the authority to stop work if raptors are exhibiting agitated behavior. In consultation with CDFG, and depending on the behavior of the raptors, over time, it may be determined that the on-site biologist/monitor may no longer be necessary due to the raptors' acclimation to construction related activities. Any trees containing nests that must be removed as a result of project implementation shall be removed during the non-breeding season, and PG&E will be responsible for off-setting the loss of any such raptor nesting trees. The extent of any necessary compensatory habitat replacement shall be determined in consultation with CDFG. (Past recommended mitigation for the loss of nesting trees has been at a ratio of three trees for each nest tree removed during the non-nesting season.)

APM-BIO-01 Wildlife Habitat Protection. PG&E proposes the following measures to protect special-status species, wildlife, and habitat during project construction.

1. A qualified biologist will provide environmental awareness training to all construction personnel before construction begins. Workers will be given instruction on avoiding

sensitive habitats and special-status species, and the nature and purpose of protection measures.

2. Biological monitors will direct access and construction work in a manner that minimizes potential impacts to wetlands and other sensitive habitats, and will use flagging, stakes, or fencing to mark sensitive areas and/or routes through sensitive areas, as appropriate.
3. To the extent feasible, all activities associated with the construction of the project will be conducted on previously constructed access roads and similarly disturbed and compacted areas. Heavy equipment and vehicles will be confined to designated routes and work areas. No equipment will be staged in wetland habitats.
4. Any vegetation clearing or other disturbances to vegetation will be kept to the minimum area necessary to safely facilitate construction activities and will maintain compliance with all applicable state and federal regulations.
5. Construction crews will properly fence and/or cover unattended, open excavations to prevent wildlife entrapment.
6. All food wrappers and construction-related garbage will be placed in covered garbage cans and removed from the site daily.
7. No pets, campfires, or firearms will be permitted within the project area.
8. Construction crews will immediately report all observations of any listed species to the biological monitor and take care not to move, touch, harm, or harass the species. If a listed species is discovered in a work area, all work shall cease in that area; construction may not resume until the individual(s) of the species has moved away on its own. In accordance with federal and California endangered species acts, PG&E will inform appropriate federal and State resource agency personnel of any such sighting.
9. A spill control and response plan will be developed for potentially hazardous materials, including fuels, solvents, and grease.
10. PG&E will manage stormwater runoff with the implementation of a SWPPP, including returning disturbed soils to pre-project conditions and contours following construction.
11. To the extent feasible, PG&E will perform tree trimming and removal, outside the bird nesting season -- February 1 to August 31. If habitat removal is required during the bird nesting season, or construction will take place adjacent to nesting habitat during the nesting season, a qualified biologist will conduct surveys for nesting birds, as noted below.

APM BIO-02 Special-status Plants. PG&E will implement five measures during and after ground disturbing activities near known populations of Ahart's dwarf rush (*Juncus leiospermus* var. *ahartii*; CNPS List 1B.2) to avoid and reduce potential impacts on these special-status plant populations. These measures will include: 1) installation of protective fencing around the population and limiting nearby ground disturbance; 2) on-site biological monitoring; 3) environmental awareness training for construction personnel, including information on the location and nature of special-status plants; 4) returning the construction site to pre-project conditions; and 5) managing stormwater runoff with the implementation of a SWPPP.

MM-BIO-03 Wetland and Water Features. The proposed project is located within the watersheds of Pleasant Grove Creek, Ingram Slough, Auburn Ravine, and Markham Ravine, and will

affect several roadside ditches which are tributary to these major drainages. Pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, PG&E has filed for, and will receive, an authorization to use ACOE Nationwide Permit 12 for work within waters of the U.S. In addition, PG&E has requested water quality certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

Implementation of the proposed project will entail placement of two poles within wetland features, permanently removing 0.0004 acre (17.4 square feet) of wetland. Temporary direct disturbances associated with the proposed project will result in temporary impacts to a total of 0.2408 acres of wetlands and water features. Affected wetland and water features include seasonal wetlands, intermittent drainage, open water, freshwater marsh, and limited areas of riparian scrub, most of which occur in association with existing roadside drainages.

PG&E will implement the project under the direction of a SWPPP, which will direct the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will address temporary and indirect impacts on wetland and water features, with the implementation of erosion control measures, and post-construction stabilization of wetland areas affected by construction. A small amount of wetland will be removed by the project and will be compensated for with the purchase of vernal pool credits. In keeping with the regulatory requirements of the Clean Water Act, PG&E has reviewed the proposed project with the ACOE, and based on this consultation will compensate for the permanent loss of wetlands as a part of the project.

APM-BIO-03 Nesting Birds. Activities that result in the loss of an active nest of a designated native bird are a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The disruption of an active raptor nest is a violation of Section 3503 of the California Fish and Game Code. The implementation of the proposed protection measures listed below will address potential nesting disruptions.

- PG&E will avoid disturbance to breeding/nesting birds (February 1 – August 31); this measure includes avoidance of helicopter activity around raptor nests.
- During breeding season, within one week prior to starting work, a qualified biological monitor will identify raptor nests within 0.25 mile of the project, and nests for all other native birds within 200 feet of the project area. Should sensitive raptor nests be located within this distance, CDFG will be consulted to assure that there is no potential for activities to result in nest failure.
- Prior to the onset of work activities that may disturb nesting birds, the qualified biological monitor will conduct preconstruction surveys to determine if nesting birds are using a work area. These surveys will include ten-minute morning point counts at each site, not more than one week before construction. In consultation with CDFG, inactive nests (other than those of eagles, which are not likely to occur in the project corridor) may be removed proactively to prevent their being utilized.
- If nesting birds are present at the site, the qualified biological monitor will determine whether a proposed activity could cause found nests to fail. The risk of nest failure will depend on many factors, including the nature of the activity, the type of bird, the stage of the nest and its distance from the work site, and the intervening topography and vegetation. Activity with the potential to cause nest failure will be delayed until after fledging, moved to another location, or PG&E will coordinate with USFWS or CDFG as per established procedures.

APM-CR-01 Awareness Training for Cultural and Paleontological Resources. Prior to commencing construction activities, field crews will receive instruction on cultural and paleontological resources protection and reporting protocols. Instruction will cover the potential for unanticipated discoveries during ground-disturbing activities associated with the project, and the actions to take in the event of a discovery (see APM-CR-02, below).

APM-CR-02 Protocols for Cultural or Paleontological Resources Discovery. Should previously unknown cultural or paleontological resources be encountered during project-related subsurface disturbances, work will be stopped within 100 feet of the find, pending consultation with a PG&E Cultural Resource Specialist or his/her designated representative. He/she will determine the potential significance of the find and recommend appropriate treatment measures. Such measures may include, but are not necessarily limited to, avoidance, photo and documentary recording, subsurface testing, excavation, and curation of materials with an appropriate repository. Any fossils discovered during project excavations will be identified and, if significant, donated to a local repository. The PG&E Cultural Resources Specialist will also consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) as appropriate, under the National Historic Preservation Act. The duration of work stoppages will depend on the extent, integrity, and potential significance of the encountered resource, and the outcome of any consultations initiated with the SHPO.

APM-CR-03 Procedures for Discovery of Human Remains. If human remains are discovered within the project area during construction, work within 100 feet of the remains will be suspended immediately, and PG&E and/or its representative will immediately notify the county coroner. If the remains are determined by the coroner to be Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) will be notified within 24 hours, and the guidelines of the NAHC will be adhered to in the treatment and disposition of the remains. PG&E and/or its representative will conduct a field investigation of the specific site and consult with the Most Likely Descendant (MLD) identified by the NAHC. PG&E, or its appointed representative, will implement any measures as needed prior to the resumption of activities at the site where the remains were discovered.

APM-HH-01 Hazardous Materials Management. To minimize the potential for release of hazardous materials and risk of upset, PG&E will use the following standard operating procedures for storage, refueling, and maintenance of construction vehicles and equipment during project implementation. PG&E will review these measures at the start of the project with on-site personnel. The briefing will cover the availability of spill kits, procedures for reporting and cleaning up the release of hazardous materials, and protocols for handling hazardous materials on the site. PG&E will also meet all California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) workplace safety standards to assure worker safety in the handling and use of hazardous materials.

APM-HH-02 Hazardous Materials Storage. Fuels, solvents, lubricants and other potentially hazardous materials will be stored offsite at an existing, nearby PG&E Service Center. If hazardous materials are used on site for maintaining or repairing vehicles, spill kits will be available onsite for immediate use.

APM-HH-03 Spill Prevention and Control. As specified in the SWPPP, all motorized equipment will be inspected for leaking oil, fuels, or fluids, and repaired prior to onsite use. Refueling will not take place within 100 feet of a wetland or sensitive biological resource without precautions for accidental spill. If spills occur onsite, measures will be enacted immediately to contain the material, and the designated PG&E Environmental Field Specialist will be notified. As directed by the Field Specialist, the site will be cleaned, and contaminated materials will be disposed of properly.

APM-HH-04 Air Transit Coordination. PG&E will follow these protocols in regard to air traffic.

- PG&E will comply with all Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations regarding air traffic within two miles from the project corridor.
- A Lift Plan will be prepared for review by the FAA prior to all helicopter construction operations. The Lift Plan will address coordination of take offs and landings with Lincoln Regional Airport, as well as with residents, and local land owners. The plan will include protocols for communications with landing sites and coordination with other aircraft uses in the vicinity of the worksites.
- PG&E will submit FAA required filings for all helicopter work within 25 miles of Beale Air Force Base (AFB) airspace, and notify Lincoln Regional Airport.

APM-HH-05 Evacuation Route Planning. PG&E will address emergency access, in keeping with permit requirements from local agencies, for work on Gladding Road. Emergency preparedness and an evacuation route to be used during emergency situations will be described in a Health and Safety Plan prepared by PG&E. In addition, PG&E will follow the protocols below to ensure proper response to any emergency response or evacuation plan.

- Vehicles used for this project will be positioned to avoid blocking any roadways that might impair the emergency response or the implementation of any evacuation plans. If a PG&E vehicle must be parked on a roadway, a clear path will be maintained to facilitate traffic movement around the vehicle, as specified in encroachment and transportation permits for work on state and local roadways.

APM-HH-06 Risk of Wildfire. During the fire season, prior to construction initiation each day, PG&E crew chief(s) will check fire hazard levels for areas where project construction activities are planned to occur and will take proper precautions to minimize the chance of accidental fires. At times of “moderate” or higher fire hazard, PG&E will implement the following measures in areas of potential fire hazard:

- Water supplies and fire-fighting equipment will be sited in the proposed project area, or in vehicles present at the project site, and will be available for fire protection during the fire season.
- PG&E will ensure that vehicles and equipment primarily use existing roads to access work sites, and park away from dry vegetation.
- PG&E will prohibit trash burning and smoking on the project site.

APM-HWQ-01 Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. Prior to implementation of the proposed project, PG&E shall file with the State Water Resources Control Board notice of intention to use the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity. As required by this permit, PG&E will prepare and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP will address site-specific controls for addressing storm water pollution. The SWPPP will address erosion and transport of sediments, stabilization of disturbed soils, dust suppression, spill prevention and containment of hazardous materials, and groundwater management with BMPs summarized below.

- Erosion from project-disturbed areas will be controlled by appropriate installation/application of BMPs to trap and stabilize sediment, including installation and maintenance of silt fences, wattles, straw bales, berms, fiber filtration tubes, sand/gravel bags, gravel, and other structures or materials. Additionally, tracking controls will be implemented to control soil movement onto public roadways.
- Areas of disturbed soils will be stabilized following construction with the reestablishment of vegetation similar to pre-project conditions. Vegetation will be established as appropriate for onsite conditions with hydro-seeding, application of straw mulch and/or hand seeding.
- Dust will be abated onsite with applications of water (via water truck), stockpile covers, and management of soil tracked on to project roadways. Dirt that is tracked out onto a paved roadway will be removed by a streetsweeper and vacuum truck.
- The use of hazardous materials for project vehicle maintenance will occur only in areas designated for such materials use (away from sensitive resources), and be performed only when materials for spill cleanup are onsite. Procedures to ensure that accidental spills are contained and removed from the site will be followed if any such events occur.
- PG&E will specify self-contained washout for all concrete trucks delivering concrete to the site. Wash water will be removed from the project area and recycled by the concrete provider in concrete mixing. If self contained washout is not possible, PG&E will establish washout stations in areas that are well removed from sensitive resources.

APM-NOI-01 Limited Operations. Noise-generating project activities will be restricted to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except as necessary for health and safety purposes to reestablish electrical service, to address emergency situations, or accommodate outage schedules.

APM-NOI-02 Idling Restrictions. Commercial vehicles over 26,000 pounds and all off road equipment rated over 70 horsepower, will be limited to idling for five minutes (Section 2485 of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations). Moreover, in accordance with APM-AQ-02, attempts will be made to further reduce idling times through application of a “common sense” approach to use of these vehicles.

APM-NOI-03 Equipment. All internal combustion engine-driven equipment will be equipped with intake and exhaust mufflers, which are in good condition and appropriate for the equipment.

- All stationary noise-generating construction equipment, such as air compressors and portable power generators, will be located as far as practical from existing noise-sensitive receptors.
- Where feasible, "quiet" air compressors and other stationary noise sources will be used.

APM-NOI-04 Temporary Barriers. Temporary barriers will be used where feasible to screen stationary noise-generating equipment when located in areas adjoining noise-sensitive land uses. Temporary barriers can include vehicles or temporary structures placed between the noise-generating equipment and the sensitive land use.

APM-NOI-05 Construction Traffic. To avoid and reduce construction traffic in residential areas, all construction traffic to and from the project site will be routed via existing designated truck routes. Project construction-related heavy truck traffic will be limited in residential areas where

practicable. Project construction truck traffic will be prohibited in designated areas (e.g., residential neighborhoods) during non-allowed hours.

APM-UPS-01 Underground Service Alert. PG&E will ensure that the Underground Service Alert is notified at least 14 days prior to initiation of ground disturbing construction activities. Underground Service Alert verifies the location of all existing underground facilities and alerts other utilities to mark their facilities in the area of anticipated construction activities. Underground utilities will be avoided during construction. Prior to construction, other PG&E facilities (e.g., gas lines) will be identified to ensure there is no construction conflict with the facilities.

APM-REC-01 Project Notification and Signage. For project construction near public bike paths, PG&E proposes to implement the following measures to minimize adverse impacts with respect to both access to, and work being conducted on or adjacent to, public bike paths.

- PG&E will post signs indicating the extent of construction. Signs will be placed at the entrance point for each worksite, and along bike paths adjacent to the visible work area. At a minimum, each sign will provide the project name, expected dates of worksite use, and a suggested detour.

APM-TRA-01 Temporary Traffic Controls. Caltrans' Construction Manual requires temporary traffic control planning "any time the normal function of a roadway is suspended" (Caltrans 2001). To prevent excessive congestion or traffic hazards during lane closures, PG&E will develop traffic diversion plans in compliance with Caltrans' guidelines and city and county policies for all locations of potential lane closures or width reductions prior to project construction. Construction activities in, along, and crossing local roadways will follow Caltrans' Best Management Practices to minimize impacts to traffic and transportation in the project area, as detailed in Caltrans manuals for traffic control (Caltrans 2003, 2004, 2006, and 2007). Prior to construction, PG&E will obtain all necessary transportation and/or encroachment permits from local jurisdictions and Caltrans, including those for the State Route 65 crossings and transport of oversized loads and certain materials.

APM-TRA-02 Traffic and Parking Coordination. PG&E will post signs about lane closures as directed by the City of Lincoln, Placer County, and Caltrans permits.

4.0 Initial Study

4.1. Existing Conditions

Existing Electrical System

PG&E relies on four distribution substations to serve its electric customers in the City of Lincoln and surrounding areas: Lincoln, Pleasant Grove, Del Mar, and Rocklin substations. These substations are located at the southwest corner of Placer County and connected to PG&E's transmission network. Lincoln and Pleasant Grove substations are the focus of this project because they are located along the California State Route 65 corridor where the majority of the area's growth is concentrated.

Currently, the Lincoln and Pleasant Grove substations are connected to the electric grid via four 60 kV power lines. From the north, the Smartville – Lincoln power line originates north of Beale Air Force Base and runs south for 25 miles to the City of Lincoln. From the southern end of the transmission network, the parallel Atlantic – Pleasant Grove Nos. 1 and 2 Lines share a common pole and tower structure for about five miles. The remaining line, Lincoln to Pleasant Grove, joins Lincoln and Pleasant Grove substations to the network. Both substations have three transformers each to “step down” the voltage as needed and to route the power over the distribution lines. Service to Lincoln Substation is split during the summer months between the Smartville – Lincoln power line or the Lincoln – Pleasant Grove power line.

The proposed project will require replacing the existing conductors with new conductors and replacing most of the existing poles along approximately seven miles of the existing 60 kV power line between Lincoln Substation and Pleasant Grove Substation.

Local Setting

The project corridor lies within the jurisdictions of Placer County and the City of Lincoln. The power line runs along the Sacramento Valley floor at an elevation of 108 to 157 feet above mean sea level. The project is located on typical valley topography, which is flat land with a few gentle hills and slopes. It is situated on the alluvial deposits associated with the Feather and Sacramento rivers.

Local Land Use

The project originates in an industrial area at the north end of the City of Lincoln. Within the City of Lincoln, land uses along the project corridor include residential, industrial, commercial, parks, and open space. South of the City of Lincoln, land uses within or near the project corridor include grazing, open space, habitat conservation, and commercial (e.g., casino) and industrial uses (e.g., warehouses, manufacturing, and distribution centers).

Parcels in the project area that are in Placer County are zoned for agricultural use, and parcels in the City of Lincoln jurisdiction are within open space, residential, commercial, industrial (planned development), and light industrial zoning designations. Project roadways provide transit routes for urban and rural land uses.

Natural Resources

The project is located within the Markham Ravine, Auburn Ravine, and Pleasant Grove Creek drainages. Based on Wildlife Habitat Relationship (WHR) program data (CDFG 2005), major habitats within the project corridor include non-native ruderal habitat and annual grasslands. Habitats present within this larger backdrop include vernal pool and vernal swale complexes, open water,

freshwater marshes, areas of seasonal wetlands, and intermittent and perennial drainages supporting riparian vegetation. Annual grassland used for grazing is the predominant community type adjacent to portions of the project that lie outside of developed areas.

The sections below provide a discussion of the proposed project’s potential impacts to environmental resources.

4.2. 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?				X
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				X
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?			X	
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?			X	

Responses:

(a) Scenic Vistas. For purposes of this analysis, a scenic vista is defined as a public view from along or through an opening or corridor that is valued for its scenic quality. As such, there are no scenic vistas within the project area; therefore, the proposed project would have **no impact** on a scenic vista.

(b) Scenic Highways. There are no state- or county-designated scenic highways found within the project area (Caltrans 2010); therefore, the project would have **no impact** on these scenic resources.

(c) Visual Character. Virtually all of the changes proposed by the project would occur within the existing PG&E right-of-way, which is occupied by existing power structures. In this respect, the project presents no new types of uses or physical features and results in only a small, incremental change to the existing landscape setting.

Between Lincoln and Pleasant Grove substations, the project involves replacing 95 existing wood poles. One of the poles would be replaced with a tubular steel pole. The remaining poles would be replaced with in-kind wood poles or similar appearing fiberglass poles; two additional (new) poles

composed of one of these materials would be installed as well. Project construction would not require removal of a substantial amount of existing vegetation.

The project route uses existing rights-of-way through industrial, residential, recreational, and natural resource protection land uses, as well as public roads. Although the project area is visible to people residing in and using these areas, the replacement of the existing power line with a new one would result in little physical change.

Because the proposed project will not substantially affect the area’s visual character, and incremental changes will not be apparent to the casual observer, the project will have a **less-than-significant** impact on the visual character and quality of the project corridor and surrounding areas.

(d) Light and Glare. Wood poles are non-reflective. Within approximately two years, the tubular steel pole would weather to a non-reflective finish. Other proposed structures (e.g., fiberglass poles) would be brown in color. Because these are relatively non-reflective surfaces that resemble wood, new pole construction would not result in glare. Further, there is no change in lighting associated with the project. Therefore, the project would have a **less-than-significant** impact on day or nighttime views due to glare or light.

4.3. Agriculture Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				X
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				X
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?				X

Responses:

(a) Farmland. The minor construction activities associated with this project will have minor, temporary effects on agricultural lands. No permanent conversion of farmland will occur as a result

of construction activities. PG&E will restore any affected lands not owned by PG&E to landowner specifications following completion of construction tasks. PG&E may locate a helicopter landing site (“fly sites”) on lands used for grazing, which will result in temporary use of less than 5 acres of farmland for nonagricultural purposes. PG&E expects to utilize small portions of these grazing lands outside of the grazing season. The temporary use of these helicopter landing zones is not expected to result in decreased agricultural production. Because these impacts are temporary, and will occur on agricultural lands out of season, **no impact** on farmland is expected as a result of this project.

(b) Ag Zoning and Williamson Act. Agricultural preserve lands are designed under the Williamson Act for portions of the project within the Orchard Creek Conservation Bank (Poles 63 to 41). These lands are actively used for cattle grazing. Gas and electric facilities are considered a compatible use in Williamson Act agricultural preserves under Section 51238 of the California Government Code. This code states:

Notwithstanding any determination of compatible uses by the county or city pursuant to this article, unless the board or council after notice and hearing makes a finding to the contrary, the erection, construction, alteration, or maintenance of gas, electric, water, communication, or agricultural laborer housing facilities are hereby determined to be compatible uses within any agricultural preserve.

Thus, gas and electric facilities are “compatible” (i.e., allowable) uses in agricultural preserves as long as the facilities will not do either of the following:

[S]ignificantly compromise the long-term productive agricultural capability of the subject contracted parcel or parcels or on other contracted lands in agricultural preserves ...

[S]ignificantly displace or impair current or reasonably foreseeable agricultural operations on the subject contracted parcel or parcels or on other contracted lands in agricultural preserves ...

Upgrading power poles and other minor modifications on land adjacent to lands currently under Williamson Act contract will not remove the land from Williamson Act contract status. The proposed project activities will not permanently alter or change the onsite agricultural land uses and, therefore, will not conflict with agricultural zoning. Thus, there will be **no impact** related to Williamson Act status and agricultural zoning.

(c) Conversion to Non-Agricultural Use. No additional land will be permanently affected by the proposed project. The amount of land that will be temporarily affected is less than 10 acres and mainly within the established right-of-way of the existing power corridor. The proposed project is compatible with existing surrounding land uses and applicable general plans and zoning ordinances and will not foster the conversion of agricultural land to urban development nor induce growth or displace people or housing units. Since the project will not involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use, there will be **no impact** to farmlands.

4.4. Air Quality

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?				X
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?			X	
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?			X	
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?				X
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?				X
Greenhouse Gas Emissions:				
f) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?*			X	
g) Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?*			X	

* The greenhouse gas checklist questions are based on proposed amendments to the CEQA Guidelines (California Office of Planning and Research, 2009) and are subject to change.

Responses:

(a) Air Quality Plans. The project activities will take place in the southwestern portion of Placer County, which is within the Sacramento Valley Area Air Basin (SVAB). The project will result in short-term emissions related to construction, which will not be considered cumulatively considerable net increases changing state or federal ambient air quality attainment status and will have **no impact** to cause conflict with or obstruct implementation of the SVAB plan.

(b) Air Quality Standards. The Placer County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) manages air resources within the project area and has established thresholds for significance for CEQA review of

proposed projects. The thresholds are 25 pounds per day for NO_x and ROG; 80 pounds per day for PM₁₀ and SO_x; and 500 pounds per day for CO. At this time, the Placer County APCD has not set a threshold for PM_{2.5} (Placer County 2009). The project will not exceed the daily thresholds as established by the Placer County APCD, will not violate any air quality standard, and will not contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation.¹

Emission estimates for the proposed project are based on each construction phase and use the highest projected emission levels for each given pollutant to determine projected daily levels. The project phases include pre-construction pole and anchor hole excavation, staging material, framing and setting poles, reconductoring lines, and cleanup. The highest projected total daily emissions for each pollutant during any of the phase of project construction are: CO - 13 pounds per day; NO_x -18 pounds per day; PM₁₀ -1 pound per day; and ROG – 4 pounds per day. These emission estimates are below the thresholds established by the Placer County APCD.

Because the highest projected daily emissions will not exceed emission thresholds set by the Placer County APCD, the project will not violate any air quality standard. Nor would it be expected to contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. In addition, the application of **APM-AQ-01 Fugitive Dust Controls**, **APM-AQ-03 Carpooling**, and **APM-AQ-02 Construction Equipment Exhaust Reductions** (Section 3.6) will minimize the potential for violations of the Placer County APCD Rule 202 (Visible Emissions), and Rule 205 (Nuisance), and minimize exhaust from construction worker vehicles and equipment. Therefore, the project will have a **less-than-significant impact** on air quality.

(c) Non-Attainment Pollutants. Non-attainment pollutants in the project region are ozone (O₃) 1-hour standard, O₃ 8-hour standard, and fine particulate matter PM₁₀ (CARB 2002). The proposed construction activities are temporary in nature, with negligible emissions that will not exceed locally adopted significance thresholds. Therefore, the project will not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of the non-attainment pollutants, and will result in a **less-than-significant impact** on the local cumulative emission level of nonattainment pollutants.

(d) Sensitive Receptors. For purposes of this evaluation, a “sensitive receptor” is an area where human populations, especially children, seniors, and sick persons, are located, and where there is reasonable expectation of continuous human exposure within air quality standard averaging periods (i.e., 24-hour, eight-hour, and one-hour). Sensitive receptors typically include residences, hospitals, and schools. Sensitive receptors near the transmission alignment include approximately 200 private residences, six businesses, one hospital, three schools, two churches, and a casino. As the amount of project-related emissions will be below the adopted significance thresholds for the project area, the project will not expose these sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. Therefore, the project will have a **no impact** on sensitive receptors.

(e) Odors. Diesel exhaust from activities of the proposed project could generate temporary odors near isolated private residences, churches, businesses, schools, churches, and a hospital. Due to the relatively small size of the project, the odors will not be substantial, and upon completion of project construction activities, these odors will cease. The project will have **no impact**, because it will not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.

¹ NO_x = nitrous oxides; ROG = reactive organic gasses; SO_x = sulfur oxides; CO = carbon monoxide.

(f,g) Greenhouse Gases. For potential regulatory action, greenhouse gases (GHGs) are generally defined as: carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrous oxide (N₂O), methane (CH₄), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆). GHG emissions are generally expressed in units of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). Concentrations of the gases are converted into CO₂e according to their global warming potential (CO₂ = 1.) The most common GHG is CO₂, which constitutes approximately 84 percent of all GHG emissions in California. In October 2008, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) released state-wide interim CEQA thresholds of significance for GHGs. For industrial projects like this project, CARB proposed a quantitative threshold of 7,000 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent (MTCO₂e/yr) per year. At this time, the Placer County APCD does not address significance criteria for or impacts from GHG emissions.

Given that the power line already exists, and the project is simply maintaining existing sections by replacing poles and conductor, project operation will not result in new vehicular activity; thus there will be no increased greenhouse gas emissions to the earth's atmosphere as a whole from project operations. The principal source of GHG emissions from the proposed project will result from temporary construction activities, namely the burning of fuel required to operate construction equipment and vehicles used for transporting workers, equipment, and supplies. Because the main source of emissions would be internal combustion, the principal GHG produced would be CO₂. Project GHG emission estimates are presented in the table below:

Table 4-1 Greenhouse Gas Emission Estimates Without APMs

Activity and Equipment	Emissions (Pounds/Day)
	CO ₂
Pre-construction Activities	399
Dig Pole and Anchor Holes	895
Spot Material, Frame and Set Poles	881
Reconductor Line	1,053
Helicopter	4,966
Cleanup	1,272
Total Tons for Construction Period (tons per year)	107.65

All projected GHG emissions resulting from project construction are short term. The estimated GHG emissions from project construction are below CARB's proposed threshold and in addition will be an inconsequentially small fraction of California's annual GHG emissions during the brief construction period. The project impacts relative to GHG emissions and contribution to climate change are considered **less than significant**.

Nevertheless, PG&E will further reduce CO₂ emissions by implementing APM-AQ-02 through APM-AQ-05 as part of the proposed project. Modeled calculations are not available for all measures, but with implementation of APM-AQ-02, construction equipment operation hours are expected to be reduced by 1 hour per day, by minimizing the idling limit to less than 5 consecutive minutes. With implementation of APM-AQ-03, PG&E will encourage its employees and construction workers to carpool. These measures are expected to reduce the GHG emissions 5.6 percent over the construction period (Table 4-2).

Table 4-2 Greenhouse Gas Emission Estimates With Application of APMs

Activity and Equipment	Emissions (Pounds/Day)
	CO ₂
Pre-construction Activities	378
Dig Pole and Anchor Holes	848
Spot Material, Frame and Set Poles	834
Reconductor Line	997
Helicopter	4,966
Cleanup	1,205
Total Tons for Construction Period (tons per year)	101.94

PG&E is also implementing several voluntary company-wide actions to further reduce GHG emissions. Continuing implementation of these GHG reduction actions will help to meet the State goal of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, relative to operational emissions.

- PG&E is an active member of the EPA SF₆ Emission Reduction Partnership, which focuses on reducing emissions of SF₆ from transmission and distribution operations. Since 1998, PG&E has reduced the SF₆ leak rate by 89 percent and absolute SF₆ emissions by 83 percent.
- PG&E supports the Natural Gas STAR, a program promoting the reduction of methane (at least 21 times as potent as CO₂ on a per-ton basis) from natural gas pipeline operations. Since 1998, PG&E has avoided the release of thousands of tons of methane.
- In June 2007, PG&E launched the ClimateSmart program, a voluntary GHG emission reduction program that allows its customers to balance out the GHG emissions that are produced by the energy they use, making their energy use “climate neutral.” For ClimateSmart customers, PG&E calculates the amount needed to make the GHG emissions associated with the customer’s energy use “climate neutral” and adds this tax-deductible amount to their monthly energy bill. One hundred percent of these customer payments are applied to funding new GHG emission reduction projects in California, such as projects that capture methane gas from dairy farms and landfills, and those that conserve and restore California’s forests.
- PG&E is offsetting all of the GHG emissions associated with the energy used in PG&E’s buildings by participating in its ClimateSmart program. In 2007, this amounted to over 50,000 tons of CO₂ reductions.

In addition, PG&E will implement the California Air Resources Board Early Action Measures for publicly-owned electric utilities as these policies become effective. These actions will further reduce company-wide GHG emissions for all PG&E projects.

4.5. 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?		X		
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?		X		
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands, as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.), through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?		X		
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any 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?			X	
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				X
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				X

Responses:

(a) Special-status Species

Federally Listed Species. The project corridor has the potential to support three federally-listed animal species, and one state-listed animal species. These are discussed in the following paragraphs. The proposed project is under review by the USFWS for impacts to federally listed species, as specified by the federal Endangered Species Act.

Central Valley Steelhead. In 2005, the National Marine Fisheries Service designated critical habitat for the Central Valley steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*, federally threatened) in Auburn Ravine, which bisects the power line between poles 110 and 109. However, these poles were previously replaced and will remain in place for continued use. A pull site at Pole 109 will be established with locations for parking trucks east and west of the pole. The pull site will be located to the extent possible on portions of the existing bicycle-pedestrian path. However, some truck movement overland adjacent to the path is expected, such as backing a three-reel take-up truck into place to position it appropriately for pulling conductor. These portions of the pull site are primarily dominated by non-native annual grasses with a small patch of Himalayan blackberry. After the site is mowed, PG&E crews and equipment will work over the vegetation. The proposed working areas are separated from the live stream by a berm that is 2 to 3 feet tall. Further, as described in **APM-HWQ-01 Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan** (Section 3.6), the SWPPP will specify BMPs to ensure that water quality in the nearby stream remains substantially unaffected by project activities. Because the proposed activities associated with this pull site would only affect a limited portion of the understory vegetation, are hydrologically isolated from Auburn Ravine, and measures would be implemented to manage water quality and stabilize the site as described in the SWPPP, the proposed use of this pull site would not alter the primary constituent elements as designated for steelhead. For these reasons, the project will have **no impacts** on Auburn Ravine and the Central Valley steelhead.

Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp and Vernal Pool Tadpole Shrimp. Vernal pools within the proposed project corridor provide potential habitat for federally-listed invertebrate species, including vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*, federally-threatened) and vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardi*, federally-endangered). Critical habitat for both the vernal pool tadpole shrimp and the vernal pool fairy shrimp was designated by the USFWS February 10, 2006 (USFWS 2006). No critical habitat for these species was designated within the project corridor.

Vernal pool fairy shrimp occupy Orchard Creek Conservation Bank (Bank), which is located immediately north of the Thunder Valley Casino and Athens Avenue (Wildlands 1997), and the Bank has habitat with the potential to support the vernal pool tadpole shrimp. The project traverses the Orchard Creek Conservation Bank, but direct permanent loss of habitat will be limited to the area of new pole installation within a vernal pool feature (Pole 017). Project construction will permanently impact 0.0002 acre (8.4 square feet) of suitable habitat.

Direct, temporary impacts are likely to occur to allow access to poles and construction close to poles. Temporary impacts will take place within 25-foot work areas surrounding the new poles and where access routes overlap wetland features. Direct, temporary impacts associated with new poles and access routes will total 0.1752 acre. Indirect, temporary

impacts will consist of ground disturbance within 20 feet of wetland features. PG&E will implement the project with avoidance and minimization measures required by the USFWS and described in the Programmatic Biological Opinion that has been issued for these species and those included in **MM-BIO-01 Federally Listed Species** in Section 3.6, which were developed in consultation with the USFWS. These measures require: use of fiberglass instead of wood poles at specified locations; construction during the dry season; designated avoidance areas during construction; a spill control and response plan; use of fiberglass construction mats; onsite biological monitoring during construction; environmental awareness training for the construction crew; implementation of erosion control measures and post construction stabilization of the disturbed areas. Implementation of project activities will include the avoidance and minimization measures required by the USFWS and adopted by PG&E (e.g., **MM-BIO-01 Federally Listed Species**). Project impacts on vernal pool species will be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

State Listed Species: Swainson's Hawk. Uplands and riparian forest provide habitat for the California-threatened Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) within the project corridor. Swainson's hawks nest in large, scattered trees adjacent to the open areas they use for foraging, such as grasslands, wetlands, oak savannahs, and agricultural lands (CDFG 2005). Four California Natural Diversity Database occurrences for Swainson's hawk have been recorded within five miles of the project corridor; the nearest is in the vicinity of Markham Ravine near Lincoln Substation (CDFG 2010).

The risk of project impact on Swainson's hawk is limited to the nesting season, which typically extends from February to late August. Nests may be abandoned due to increased noise levels and human activity nearby. The risk of abandonment is highest early in the nest cycle, before the adult birds have much invested. Disturbances also may cause reproductive failure at the end of the nest cycle by causing nestlings to fledge prematurely, making them more susceptible to predation and starvation.

While implementing project activities, PG&E proposes measures to avoid and reduce nest disturbance on Swainson's hawks, including pre-construction nest surveys, nest protection zones should any nests be located, and biological monitors to determine disturbance levels to nests. These avoidance measures should lessen the potential for impact. Implementation of the proposed project as described with **MM-BIO-02 State Listed Species: Nesting Swainson's Hawk** will have **less-than-significant** impacts on the Swainson's hawk.

Special-status Wildlife. The diversity of cover types and terrain within the project corridor provides a wide range of habitat conditions for special-status wildlife. Habitats within the project corridor are expected to support the additional special-status wildlife species listed below. Special-status wildlife can be affected by construction disturbances (noise and intrusion) and habitat alteration. Special-status bird nesting can be disturbed by construction activities. These impacts are addressed under nesting birds. The text below describes the potential for construction-related impacts to special-status wildlife species potentially present within the project corridor:

Western spadefoot toad (*Spea hammondi*). These toads (California Special Concern Species) could be present in or near seasonal wetlands and vernal pool habitat, especially during favorable weather conditions. Ground disturbing activities could cause indirect effects by modifying upland habitat. Upland vegetation could be affected by vehicular traffic, water quality alteration, and erosion, but any such effects will be temporary.

Northwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata marmorata*). This California Special

Concern Species could be present at, or near, ponds, waterways, and freshwater marsh vegetation. While wetland areas will be avoided (except as described above for vernal pools), ground disturbance and vehicle traffic along access roads and at the pull site near Auburn Ravine Park poses a risk of adult mortality, nest destruction, and temporary dispersal of individuals. This risk is greatest in the summer when nesting females are in upland habitat to lay eggs. Potential indirect effects that could harm breeding habitat include pollution from vehicles/equipment related activities, a temporary increase in human-related garbage, and a temporary increase in sedimentation due to dust from construction traffic or increased erosion. However, since activities will occur almost entirely along pre-existing roads, such disturbance will only be slightly more than normal for a temporary period. In addition, application of **APM-BIO-01 Wildlife Habitat Protection** (Section 3.6) will minimize the potential for such indirect effects to occur.

Tricolored blackbirds (*Agelaius tricolor*) and northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). These California Special Concern Species can potentially nest in wetland and riparian habitats, including stands of cattails, rushes, shrub-willow, and blackberries. Minimizing vegetation disturbance, especially at the Orchard Creek crossing and Ingram Slough, will minimize the potential to impact nesting habitat for these birds.

To reduce the potential for impacts on special-status species, the project-incorporated **APM-BIO-01 Wildlife Habitat Protection** includes 11 environmental protocols that will be implemented during project construction. These include: 1) providing environmental awareness training on special-status wildlife for construction personnel; 2) providing onsite biological monitors to direct construction activities in a manner to minimize potential impacts, including marking wetland areas such as freshwater marsh for avoidance; 3) limiting access-related site disturbance; 4) minimizing disturbance to vegetation; 5) fencing or covering unattended excavations to prevent wildlife entrapment; 6) containment and daily removal of all food-related garbage, then removing all construction materials and trash from the site at the completion of the project; 7) prohibiting pets, campfires, or firearms during project work; 8) managing for the potential release of hazardous materials; 9) returning the construction sites to pre-project conditions; 10) managing stormwater runoff with the implementation of a SWPPP; and 11) limiting access to sites based on seasonal activity patterns of special-status wildlife.

Implementation of the proposed construction activities in concert with the proposed environmental protection measures included in **APM-BIO-01 Wildlife Habitat Protection** will result in **less-than-significant** impacts on special-status wildlife.

Special-status Plants. Vernal pool and vernal swale habitat can support Ahart's dwarf rush (*Juncus leiopermus* var. *ahartii*; CNPS List 1B.2). Suitable habitat for this species is present throughout the project corridor, especially within the Orchard Creek Conservation Bank. Two populations of Ahart's dwarf rush were found within the project corridor at Pole 061 and near Pole 042. Prior to construction, these populations will be marked for avoidance. Construction personnel will be required to avoid these areas.

PG&E will implement five measures during and after ground disturbing activities near these special-status plants to reduce some potential impacts on these populations, including: 1) limiting on-site disturbance; 2) on-site biological monitoring; 3) environmental awareness training for construction personnel, including information on the locations and nature of special-status plants; 4) returning the construction sites to pre-project conditions; and 5) managing storm water runoff with the

implementation of a SWPPP. Implementation of the proposed project with **APM-BIO-02 Special-status Plants** will reduce this impact to **less than significant**.

(b,c) Natural Communities and Wetlands. Based on wildlife habitat relationship data (CDFG 2005), major habitats within the project corridor include non-native ruderal habitat and annual grasslands. Habitats present within this larger backdrop include vernal pool and vernal swale complexes, riparian scrub, freshwater marshes, and areas of seasonal wetlands.

With comprehensive mapping of wetland and water features and careful planning, PG&E has designed a project that avoids almost all direct disturbance to these areas. Locations for pole placement and construction staging have been selected so that they are outside the boundaries of mapped wetland and water features where feasible. This project will require the placement of only two poles within wetland features: poles 065 and 017. These poles cannot be located outside of wetlands due to the extensive nature of wetlands at these sites, right-of-way limitations, and engineering constraints. The placement of these two poles will result in a permanent loss of 0.0004 (17.4 square feet) acre of wetland.

The use of temporary access routes will result in temporary, direct impacts on wetland resources at three locations. These include: 1) use of unimproved access through the Orchard Creek Conservation Bank to reach Pole 068; 2) access from Athens Avenue along Industrial Avenue to reach Pole 017; and, 3) access to Pole 016 through the Athens Avenue transfer station. The access route through the Orchard Creek parcel will disturb a total of 0.1103 acre of wetlands and water features. The access route from Athens Avenue along Industrial Avenue will temporarily disturb 0.0580 acre of wetland. Access to Pole 016 will disturb 0.0050 acre of seasonal wetland. Construction activities at poles 065, 052, and 017 will be restricted to one side of the pole, but will still cause temporary disturbances of wetlands at these poles that will total 0.0675 acre.

The total temporary, direct disturbances associated with these elements of the proposed project will result in a total of 0.2408 acre of wetland and water features. PG&E proposes to implement construction and maintenance elements of the project when soil conditions are dry and to implement BMPS in areas of ground disturbance as described in the project-specific SWPPP.

Wetlands resources near ground disturbing activities could be affected by undirected vehicle and equipment traffic or the unanticipated use of wetland areas for material lay down or equipment staging. Storm water runoff could transport sediments and pollutants into wetland features down slope from work sites. However, all potential impacts will be managed by on-site construction monitoring and the implementation of the hazardous materials control plan and the SWPPP. With the implementation of **MM-BIO-03 Wetland and Water Features** (Section 3.6), project-related impacts to wetland resources will be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

(d) Nesting Birds. The project corridor includes a variety of habitats that could support nesting birds that are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Work alongside riparian and wetland areas has the potential to disturb a variety of native and migratory bird species in any season. The potential for impacts to reproduction are greatest in spring and summer (February to August).

While riparian and wetland areas should not be directly affected by work (except as discussed above for vernal pools and a very small amount of riparian habitat near Pole 109), auditory and visual disturbances from nearby construction could disturb nesting birds. Raptors may be disturbed from greater distances (up to 0.25 mile), depending on the presence of visual barriers. Also of concern are ground-nesting birds such as the northern harrier and western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*, California Species of Special Concern), and other special-status bird species

nesting in other habitat types, including grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*), purple martin (*Progne subis*), and tricolored blackbirds – all California Species of Special Concern -- and white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*, California fully protected).

The risk to nesting birds is limited to the nesting season, which varies by species and year but typically extends from February through August in the region. Nests may be abandoned due to increased noise levels and human activity nearby; the distance from the work activity at which this can occur varies depending on species and topography. The risk of abandonment is highest early in the nest cycle, before the adult birds have much invested. The above disturbances also may cause reproductive failure at the end of the nest cycle by causing nestlings to fledge prematurely, making them more susceptible to predation and starvation. Construction and maintenance activities that result in a loss of an active nest of nearly any native bird are a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and/or Section 3503 of the CFGC. Therefore, the loss of an active nest is considered a significant impact. Nest searches and avoidance measures should lessen the potential for impacts. Maintenance and construction disturbance cannot be wholly avoided, but would not be expected to reach the level where loss of an active nest occurs. Implementation of the proposed project with the protection measures listed in **APM-BIO-03 Nesting Birds** will ensure that PG&E will: implement measures to identify active nests prior to conducting project activities in nesting bird habitats during nesting season; take precautions to avoid nest failure; and will consult appropriately with State and federal agencies regarding potential nesting bird impacts. Implementation of the proposed project with **APM-BIO-03 Nesting Birds** will reduce potential nesting bird impacts to a level that is **less than significant**.

(e) Local Policies and Ordinances.

Tree Trimming and Removal. Although PG&E's utility project activities are exempt from local tree ordinances, tree removal and trimming within the project area is generally governed by the Placer County tree ordinance, which protects native trees having a single main stem or trunk at least six inches in diameter at breast height, or multiple trunks with an aggregate of at least ten inches diameter at breast height. Foothill pines are exempt from the ordinance (Placer County 2010). In any case, the proposed construction will not require tree trimming or removal for construction access, or installation of new lines or poles. The routine maintenance associated with agency-mandated clearances for this project is also exempt from the Placer County tree ordinance (Placer County Code 12.16.050 D). There will be **no impact** to trees protected by the Placer County Tree Ordinance.

(f) Conservation Planning. In June 2000, Placer County began the Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP), a Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) and Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), in order to comply with the State and federal endangered species acts and to programmatically comply with Federal Clean Water Act wetlands requirements (Placer County 2009). The City of Lincoln and the unincorporated westerly portions of the County (west of Supervisorial District Five) area are proposed for permit (NCCP/HCP) coverage. Portions of the proposed PG&E project are within this planning area. The PCCP, currently a work in progress, will provide land use scenarios and preferred planning alternatives. Although Placer County is in the process of preparing the PCCP, which includes the NCCP/HCP requirements, the plan has not yet been adopted. Full approval is anticipated after December 2011 (pers. comm. Loren Clark, Assistant Director, Placer County Community Development Resource Agency). Therefore, the proposed project will not conflict with any applicable government-adopted HCP or NCCP. There will be **no impact** to an established habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

4.6. 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?				X
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?			X	
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource, or site, or unique geologic feature?			X	
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?			X	

Responses:

(a) Historic Resources. In keeping with Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines, record searches and field surveys of the project corridor were conducted to identify historic resources, which are broadly considered to be resources listed on local, state, or national registers; or an object, building, structure, site, area, place record, or manuscript determined to be historically significant. There are no known historic resources identified within the project corridor; therefore, construction and operation of the proposed project are not expected to affect the setting of, or modify any such resource or site. **No impacts** to significant recorded historical resources are anticipated for the project.

(b) Archeological Resources. This analysis considers the potential for project construction and operation activities to affect archeological (or subsurface artifacts, objects, or remains) as specified in Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines. A review of existing literature and pedestrian field surveys identified no archeological deposits within the project corridor. However, based on the historic and prehistoric context of the project area, subsurface archeological resources associated with the Native American occupation of the area, and/or Euro-American settlement of the area, are potentially present and could be unearthed during excavations for new pole installation.

Project operations that do not include excavation or ground disturbance are not expected to affect archeological resources. However, project activities that include excavation and ground disturbance could cause destruction, damage, alteration, or neglect to contributing elements of an eligible, or potentially eligible (unevaluated), archeological resource, if present, resulting in the loss of integrity of cultural deposits, loss of information, and/or the alteration of setting. However, PG&E has incorporated **APM-CR-01 Awareness Training, APM-CR-02 Protocols for Cultural or Paleontological Resources Discovery; and, APM-CR-03 Procedures for Discovery of Human Remains** into its project

as described in Section 3.6. Consequently, the potential for impacts associated with substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource is **less than significant**.

(c) Paleontological Resources and Unique Geological Features. A review of planning documents from Placer County and the City of Lincoln identified no unique geological features within the project corridor (Placer County 1994, COL 2008). Therefore, the project will have no impact on unique geological features.

A records search of the Berkeley Natural History Museum Paleontological Database identified no site-specific recorded fossil localities within one-half mile of the project corridor, although instances of unspecified paleontological resources have been identified at the Lincoln Clay Pits which are located approximately 0.75 mile from Lincoln Substation (BNHM 2009). The project corridor is underlain by the Riverbank Formation and partly by the Turlock Lake Formation, geologic substrates that have been known to include vertebrate fossils at other locations within the Sacramento Valley (Dundas et al. 2009). Since ground disturbance for the proposed project will be very limited (i.e., augering holes for power pole and temporary guard crossing structure placement, and a somewhat larger excavation for the single TSP), impacts on any paleontological resources that may be present in the project corridor are unlikely. With the implementation of **APM-CR-02 Protocols for Cultural or Paleontological Resources Discovery** included in the project, any fossils discovered during project excavations will be identified and, if significant, donated to a local repository. Consequently, project-related impacts on paleontological resources will be **less than significant**.

(d) Human Remains. Project investigations identified no known cemeteries or burial sites along the project corridor. For most of the project corridor, there is a very low potential for buried archaeological remains. A higher potential for human remains exists where the corridor crosses natural drainages, including Orchard Creek, Ingram Slough, Auburn Ravine, and a branch of Markham Ravine. In accordance with **APM-CR-03 Procedures for Discovery of Human Remains**, PG&E would implement assessment, protection, and proper County Coroner notification measures (in keeping with the California Health and Safety Code), should any such resources be discovered. With these measures implemented as part of the project, the potential for significant impact to human remains is **less than significant**.

4.7. Geology and Soils

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project: a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial, adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				

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

Responses:

(a,i,ii) Earthquake Faults/Ground Shaking. The project corridor does not lie on or near any active fault zones, and there are no Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zones within Placer County. The closest active regional fault is the Bear Mountain fault, located 24 miles to the east. Only mild to moderate ground shaking is expected from an earthquake triggered by movement along a regional fault. Standard engineering practices that will accommodate ground shaking will nevertheless be used in designing and installing project structures. Consequently, it is unlikely that project facilities have

significant potential to expose people or structures to loss, injury, or death as a result of seismic events. This impact is considered **less than significant**.

(a,iii) Liquefaction. Using standard engineering and construction practices, the proposed project has been designed to withstand the liquefaction potential of soils within the project corridor. Implementation of standard BMPs for soil erosion identified in the SWPPP will manage stormwater flows that can provide conditions conducive to liquefaction potential. General measures include returning the disturbed areas to pre-project contours and stabilizing disturbed soils by installation of siltation controls and seeding where appropriate. Most soils in the project vicinity have moderate to high Plasticity Index (PI) ratings (USDA NRCS 2007), indicating a relatively low potential for liquefaction. A total of six soil map units where the proposed project will take place are classified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as having PI values of less than 15 percent, considered the limit of non-liquefiable soils (Gratchev et al. 2006). None of these soils are mapped as having high contents of clayey sand (USDA NRCS 2007). Only mild to moderate ground shaking is expected in the event of an earthquake, further reducing the possibility of liquefaction in the project area. Because the project is designed to withstand potential liquefaction, will not alter drainage patterns contributing to liquefaction, and because only minimal environmental conditions are present which are conducive to liquefaction, the potential impact of liquefaction or structure collapse associated with the project is considered **less than significant**.

(a,iv) Landslides. None of the project work areas are susceptible to landsliding due to the absence of steep or moderately steep topography. According to USGS 1:24,000 scale topographic quadrangles (USGS 1981, 1992), the proposed project corridor changes only 40 feet in elevation along its approximately seven-mile course. All staging areas and areas that include ground disturbance are planned on flat or very shallow-gradient slopes. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey encompassing the project, nearly all of the surrounding terrain within one-half mile of the power line is level to gently sloping, with the highest gradient classified as less than 10 percent (USDA NRCS 2007). Furthermore, no project activities are planned in areas where the removal of the toe of a slope will compromise the stability of earth materials. Therefore, the project will have **no impact** on landslides.

(b) Soil Erosion. Project activities causing ground disturbance have the potential to result in water runoff-related erosion and sedimentation into wetlands and waterways along the project corridor. While there are no soils classified as having “severe” or “very severe” USDA erosion hazard ratings within the project area (USDA NRCS 2007), there is some potential for erosion due to project activities.

With the exception of pull sites along Industrial Avenue, project access, work/staging/lay-down areas, and pull/tension work sites will all take place on existing pavement, dirt roads and disturbed areas adjacent to roadways, reducing the potential for equipment-related erosion. However, excavation of holes, installation of the TSP base plate, installation of crossing guard structures, and overland heavy machinery travel will increase the possibility for localized soil erosion. BMPs for erosion and sediment control will be employed on sites where barren soil is subjected to wind, water or any other mechanical form of soil removal, independent of the USDA soil erosion hazard ratings. Erosion and sedimentation will be addressed during construction with the implementation of construction practices and measures as described in the SWPPP, including stockpile management, wind erosion controls, siltation control measures, revegetation of disturbed soils, and sediment tracking measures.

The SWPPP prescribes monitoring and maintenance of these BMPs until the sites have become stabilized. All construction and development associated with the proposed project must comply with these policies as well as those set forth in the Uniform Building Code. With the application of the BMPs prescribed in the SWPPP, project activities contributing to soil erosion will be **less than significant**.

(c) Soil Subsidence. Land surface subsidence can be induced by both natural and human phenomena. Natural phenomena include: subsidence resulting from tectonic deformations and seismically induced settlements; soil subsidence from consolidation, hydrocompaction, or rapid sedimentation; subsidence from oxidation or dewatering of organic-rich soils; and subsidence related to subsurface cavities. Human induced subsidence can occur in association with subsurface fluid or sediment withdrawal.

The proposed replacement of poles within the project rights-of-way (ROW) is not expected to contribute to or change any of the factors affecting soil subsidence. The potential for soil subsidence can be expected in Placer County in areas with groundwater withdrawal and natural gas extraction; however, the proposed project does not include plans to extract groundwater or energy resources. Furthermore, there are no natural gas extraction activities within the general vicinity of the project, and groundwater related subsidence usually occurs over broad areas and is not normally perceptible at the ground surface. Subsidence will not be affected by the construction or operation of the proposed project. The project will have **no impact** on soil subsidence.

(d) Expansive Soils. Much of Placer County has the potential for expansive soils, including soils within the project corridor. These soils can impose limitations for building foundations, and roadways, but are not expected to affect power poles set 10 to 15 feet deep. Therefore, the proposed project will not have **no impact** or substantial risk to life or property due to soil expansion.

(e) Soil Capability for Wastewater. There are no demands for wastewater disposal systems included in the project; therefore, no effect on soils will occur with wastewater facilities. The project will produce small amounts of wastewater associated with onsite porta-potties that will be trucked off site and disposed of at an appropriate wastewater treatment facility. The project will not utilize any soils supporting waste water disposal systems or septic tanks. Construction personnel will abide by any and all applicable laws and regulations regarding wastewater. Thus, the project will have **no impact** due to soil capacity related to waste water disposal.

4.8. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			X	

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

Responses:

Prior to beginning any work activity, PG&E will prepare a Job Hazards Analysis as part of its Health and Safety Plan. Additionally, PG&E will develop and implement both a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan. PG&E crewmembers and licensed contractors employed on the project will have been trained and certified on the topics contained in these plans. These plans and training are incorporated by reference in the following responses.

(a) Hazardous Materials Handling. Project construction will require the use of motorized, heavy equipment such as trucks, cranes, and backhoes. This equipment requires fuel and liquid replenishment in the form of gasoline, diesel, oil, hydraulic fluid, antifreeze, transmission fluid, lubricating grease, and other fluids. Fuels, equipment fluids, and lubricants will be stored at existing PG&E maintenance and operations centers, not at work sites. Proper handling of these materials, as described in the plans referenced above, and the implementation of **APM-HH-01 Hazardous Materials Management** (Section 3.6), will ensure that potential impacts are **less than significant**, and will ensure that the project complies with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

(b,c) Potential for Release of Hazardous Materials. The accidental release of hazardous materials during construction of the proposed project has the potential to cause exposure to construction personnel, the public, and the environment. A review of the project corridor identified several areas of biological sensitivity, including wetlands, waterways, and areas of natural habitat, that could be affected by the accidental release of hazardous materials. There are also developed neighborhoods, businesses, three schools, one hospital, and some open areas along the project corridor that could be affected by an unintentional release of hazardous materials.

PG&E will review the spill prevention and control measures from the SWPPP at the start of the project with on-site personnel. The briefing will cover hazardous materials handling, specify spill prevention and control measures, and procedures for reporting and cleaning up any release of hazardous materials. PG&E will also meet all California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) work place safety standards to assure worker safety in the handling and use of hazardous materials. Implementation of the SWPPP provides reasonable assurance that: the amount of hazardous materials onsite will be minimal; precautions will be taken to prevent accidental discharge; and that the effects of any accidental discharge will be minimized with rapid clean up response, protective set-backs from sensitive areas and receptors, and proper storage and disposal of hazardous materials.

The volume of hazardous materials to be used during project construction is small, and any accidental release, through spill or leak, will immediately be controlled and contained as described in the plans referenced above and in **APM-HH-02 Hazardous Materials Storage** and **APM-HH-03 Spill Prevention and Control** (Section 3.6). The potential for the project to create a hazard to public health or the environment through upset or use and disposal is considered **less than significant**.

(d) Hazardous Site. A review of agency data on known hazardous sites revealed several sites known to be associated with a historic release of hazardous materials pursuant to Government Code 65962.5. One site near the project corridor, the Redi-Mix Plant on Gladding Road, is a leaking underground storage tank (LUST) cleanup site (EDR 2009). The site has been certified clean. Within 1.75 miles of the project corridor, there are an additional 21 LUST sites (SWRCB 2008). Cleanup at 12 of these additional sites is complete, and the sites are certified clean. There are 20 additional facilities within the City of Lincoln classified as Cleanup Program Sites, Land Disposal Sites, or

Military Sites that are classified as “Open” for remediation, site assessment, or verification purposes. None of these additional sites is near, or traversed by the project alignment.

As specified in the Health and Safety Plan, and in the SWPPP prepared for the project, PG&E will comply with all applicable existing local, State, and county mandated site assessment, remediation, removal, and disposal requirements for any contaminated soil, surface water, or groundwater encountered.

Based on the plan for removal and installation of replacement poles specified in the project description, there is low potential for contamination to occur at the project work sites. In addition, given the limited scope of excavations, the proposed construction activities are not expected to expose construction personnel to hazardous materials. Therefore, the potential risk of creating a hazard to the public environment due to encounters with hazardous material sites is **less than significant**.

(e,f) Air Hazards. During construction, helicopters will transport construction materials from two “landing zones” (or fly sites). These are located as follows: 1) 0.5 mile west-southwest of the Joiner Parkway and Ferrari Ranch Road, near Pole 088; and 2) just north of the Thunder Valley Casino, between pole locations 044 and 043. The Lincoln Regional Airport is located 2.75 to 4.4 miles northwest of these fly sites, and all are within the Airport Overflight Zone (Placer County 2006). In addition, though there are no private airstrips along the project alignment, portions of the proposed project are also within the controlled air space designated for Beale AFB, approximately 18 miles to the north. FAA filing for all helicopter work within 25 miles of Beale AFB airspace is required. In addition, FAA regulations regarding air traffic within two miles from the project corridor apply.

It is PG&E’s normal practice for operation of construction helicopters to have the helicopter vendor develop and implement a Lift Plan for approval by the FAA. The plan will establish flight paths away from populated areas, to the extent feasible, to perform helicopter-required work. The plan will also include communications protocols with public and private landing sites and coordination with other aircraft uses in the vicinity of the worksites. PG&E’s current planning for this project indicates that road closures will not be needed, and residents will not be required to vacate their homes based on anticipated flight paths. In the unlikely event that final construction plans and the Lift Plan require otherwise, PG&E will implement temporary traffic control measures for road closures, and coordinate with potentially affected residents to minimize the duration of the necessary work and any resulting inconvenience. **APM-HH-04 Air Transit Coordination** will: 1) ensure the development, implementation and agency review of a lift plan; 2) provide for potential traffic control; and 3) provide coordination with local air traffic, residences, and local land owners. Operation of helicopters can pose a risk to structures or persons; however, with implementation of the **APM-HH-04**, the risk associated with people living and working within two miles of a public airport will be **less than significant**. In absence of a private airstrip, the project will have **no impact** related to the safety hazard for people working or residing within two miles of a private airstrip.

(g) Emergency Planning. Construction of the proposed project will require the mobilization and staging of heavy equipment on project area roadways to install guard structures and pull conductor. These activities can be conducted without road closures, but lane closures up to 2-4 hours in length could be required. During lane closures, PG&E will utilize appropriate traffic controls as designated by Caltrans procedures for traffic control, including flagging traffic and posting signs (Caltrans 2006 and 2007). Because roadway closures will be limited to one lane at a time, and roads will be opened in the event of an emergency, the project will not impair implementation of, or physically interfere

with, an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan. With the implementation of **APM-HH-05 Evacuation Route Planning**, impacts to emergency action planning will be **less than significant**.

(h) Wildland Fire. The majority of wildland fires are caused by human activity and are a particular concern where heat or sparks from vehicles or equipment have the potential to ignite dry vegetation in or adjacent to wildlands. Within the region, the fire season typically extends from June through October of each year during the hot, dry months.

Operations and maintenance work, which includes regular vegetation clearing to minimize the potential for fire, will continue in the same manner as it did prior to construction of the project. As a result, completion of the project will not result in a change in the fire potential in the area.

Some construction activities will take place during the fire season, and could increase the risk of fire. During the fire season, prior to construction initiation each day in areas of potential fire danger, the PG&E crew chief(s) will check fire hazard levels for areas where project construction activities are planned to occur and will take the proper precautions to minimize the chance of accidental fires. At times of “moderate” or higher fire hazard, PG&E proposes the following measures (see Section 3.6. **APM-HH-06 Risk of Wildfire**) to address the potential risk of fire.

- Water supplies and fire-fighting equipment will be sited in the proposed project area or in vehicles present at the project site and be available for fire protection during the fire season.
- PG&E will ensure that vehicles and equipment primarily use existing roads to access work sites, and park away from dry vegetation.
- PG&E will prohibit trash burning and smoking on the project site.

With the inclusion of APMs noted above, the potential to expose people or structures to risks of wild land fires will be reduced to a level that is **less than significant**.

4.9. Hydrology and Water Quality

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?			X	
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)?				X
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?			X	
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on- or off-site?			X	
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?			X	
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?			X	

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
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?				X
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?				X
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?				X
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?				X

Responses:

(a) Water Quality Standards. All applicable City, County, and State regulations and restrictions will be complied with during project construction and operation. The proposed project will use water for dust control and fire suppression as determined necessary. The project area runs next to Markham Ravine and crosses over Auburn Ravine, Ingram Slough, and Orchard Creek. Water quality could change as a result of stormwater runoff and accidental release of hazardous materials and exceed water quality standards. However, ground disturbance associated with project activities will be limited to augering holes for crossing structures near roadways and at pole replacement sites near existing poles, and to excavation associated with installation of the TSP. The proposed project has been configured to minimize ground disturbance by utilizing paved and graveled areas for staging and material laydown. With implementation of BMPs as prescribed for the project in the SWPPP, there will be no impacts to beneficial uses. No waste discharges will occur. Therefore, impacts related to water quality standards will be **less than significant**.

(b) Groundwater. As part of the construction process, holes will be augered for replacement poles and a small amount of new excavation will occur. The replacement poles will be set in holes 3 feet in diameter and up to 15 feet deep. Depending on depth, these excavations may encounter shallow groundwater. Groundwater levels vary depending on location, season, precipitation, proximity to surface water, nearby pumping wells, etc. Groundwater may be encountered during construction and will be managed as directed by the groundwater dewatering plan included in the SWPPP. Depending on local soil conditions, proximity to wetlands, and the nature of groundwater and constituents, PG&E will: 1) truck groundwater from the site and dispose of it at a wastewater treatment facility; or 2) discharge groundwater to an upland site, after treatment for suspended solids and turbidity, as specified by BMPs described in the SWPPP. Additional BMPs to be employed

include use of sediment/desilting basins and sediment traps, and/or mobile filter devices such as weir tanks, dewater tanks, and gravity filter bags. Groundwater discharge to an upland location would take place as specified under RWQCB General Order for Dewatering and Other Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters. As a result, there will be limited interaction between groundwater and work activities. Further, the project will not require the use of groundwater. Water used during project-related activities will be limited to that applied for dust control and fire suppression, will be obtained from municipal sources, and will be conveyed to the worksites via a water truck or portable tanks. Because groundwater will be managed with measures noted above, ground disturbance is limited, and all disturbed areas will be re-contoured and revegetated to reestablish vegetation similar to pre-project conditions, the project will have a **less-than-significant** impact on groundwater.

(c,d,e) Drainage Patterns and Runoff. Ground disturbance caused by heavy equipment at work sites, such as trucks, cranes, backhoes, and air compressors, has the potential to create loose soils, leading to rutting and scattering of mud, which could increase the potential for erosion. Additionally, surface runoff from denuded construction surfaces and soil stockpiles could contain turbid water and sediment if not properly managed, which could impact nearby surface waterways. A review of the project corridor identified several areas of biological sensitivity, including wetlands, waterways, vernal pools, areas of natural habitat, and existing wastewater drainage systems that could be adversely affected by increased sediment and soil erosion.

However, project activities will disturb minimal ground area and will not alter the existing drainage pattern or course of any stream or river. Consequently, no substantial erosion or siltation would be expected to occur on- or off-site. Prior to implementation of the proposed project, PG&E will prepare and implement a SWPPP and will address site-specific controls for erosion and sedimentation, including application of BMPs that include source controls and sediment management measures, thereby reducing the potential for degraded water quality in receiving waters. Further, the project will not create or contribute runoff water which will exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. As described in **APM-HWQ-01 Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan** (Section 3.6), the SWPPP will specify BMPs such as silt fences, wattles, straw bales, berms, fiber filtration tubes, sand/gravel bags, gravel, and tracking controls. For these reasons, the project will have **less-than-significant** impacts on drainage and runoff.

(f) Water Quality. During construction, routine transport, use, and disposal of fuels, lubricating oils, and hydraulic fluids will be required. As a result, potential spills or releases of these materials could occur, resulting in impacts to surface and/or groundwater. With the implementation of APMs found in the Hazards and Hazardous Materials section of this document, the potential for a spill or release is minimal, and all drainages will be protected in accordance with the project SWPPP. As a result, impacts to water quality will be **less than significant**.

(g,h,i) Flooding. In general, flooding potentials are minimal during the dry summer and fall months in the region, but increase rapidly during the winter and spring months. During the wetter periods, smaller watersheds flood regularly, with water overtopping stream banks annually in some areas. The City of Lincoln is subject to two types of flooding: overflow from Auburn and Markham ravines, and localized flooding due to inadequate surface flow drainage. The latter is partially a result of the lack of curbs and gutters in parts of the City, which in turn results in inadequate or incomplete storm drainage (City of Lincoln 2006). The existing project facilities are not situated near flood control infrastructure, and are designed to tolerate localized flooding. The project will not alter the timing

or amount of stormwater runoff, local drainage patterns, or existing stormwater conveyance systems. The project is not expected to expose people to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death. For these reasons, the project will have **no impact** on flooding duration, frequency, or depth, or the risk for flooding to people and structures.

(j) Seiche, Tsunami, Mudflow. Based on the nature and location of the project, the proposed action will have no impact on people or structures (housing) due to flooding, seiche, or tsunami. Nor will the project impede or redirect flood flows or place people or structures within areas prone to mudslides. No portion of the project area is subject to the possibility of seiche, tsunami, or mudflow, therefore, for this category, the project has a finding of **no impact**.

4.10. 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?				X
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?				X
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?				X

Responses:

(a) Community Division. Since the proposed project is an upgrade to an existing power line in an established utility corridor, it will not create a physical barrier (division) for any existing communities or neighborhoods. There will be **no impact** to established communities.

(b) Land Use Planning. The proposed project will not result in significant changes to the land uses of the parcels it traverses since an existing power line is currently located in the same corridor. In general, PG&E’s current easements or use of franchise area is a pre-existing, conforming use. A continuation of that use (i.e., operation and maintenance of the power line) will be consistent with general plan and zoning designations. The CPUC has sole and exclusive jurisdiction over the siting

and design of the proposed project, and as such, the proposed project is exempt from local land use and zoning regulations and permitting.

Portions of the project corridor occur within the Lincoln Municipal Airport Overflight Zone. This is shown in the County overlay zoning designation as a Special Purpose "SP" zone. The Placer County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) establishes procedures and criteria for compliance with the California State Aeronautics Act. The Placer County Airport Land Use Commission also reviews proposed land use development for compatibility with airport activity. The Airport Influence Area includes all lands on which the uses could be negatively affected by present or future aircraft operations at the Lincoln Regional Airport and other airports within Placer County. The Federal Aviation Administration has jurisdiction within Compatibility Zone D as mapped in the ALUCP and the City of Lincoln General Plan, in the vicinity of the Lincoln Regional Airport. Approximately 37 poles that will be replaced (from approximately Pole 090 to Pole 136) are within Compatibility Zone D. Generally, within Compatibility Zone D there is no concern with regard to any object up to 150 feet tall unless it is located on high ground or it is a solitary object (e.g., an antenna) more than 35 feet above ground. None of the poles to be installed will exceed 150 feet above ground. In addition, PG&E will follow all FAA regulations regarding air traffic within two miles of the project corridor. Further discussion of the Lincoln Municipal Airport Overflight Zone is provided above under Hazards and Hazardous Materials. Because the project will not change land uses, and is not inconsistent with local general plan and zoning designations, there will be **no impact** to established planning or regulatory policies.

(c) Conservation Planning. In June 2000, Placer County began the Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP), a Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) and Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), in order to comply with the State and federal endangered species acts and to programmatically comply with Federal Clean Water Act wetlands requirements (Placer County 2009). The City of Lincoln and the unincorporated westerly portions of the County (west of Supervisorial District Five) area are proposed for permit (NCCP/HCP) coverage. Portions of the proposed PG&E project are located within this planning area. When complete, the PCCP will provide land use scenarios and preferred planning alternatives. At present, it continues to be a work in progress with full approval anticipated after December 2011 (pers. comm. Loren Clark, Assistant Director, Placer County Community Development Resource Agency). Because the PCCP and included NCCP/HCP requirements have not yet been adopted, the proposed project will not conflict with any applicable government-adopted HCP or NCCP. There will be **no impact** to an established habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

4.11. Mineral Resources

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

Responses:

(a,b) Minerals. General plan documents from the City of Lincoln and Placer County do not identify specific sites for important mineral resource recovery within the project corridor. California’s Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA) established policy regarding the conservation and development of mineral lands in California. The California State Geologist classifies lands into Mineral Resource Zones (MRZ) based on geologic data for the purpose of delineating areas containing significant mineral resources. The project corridor has been designated MRZ-4 for metallic minerals, industrial grade minerals, and construction grade aggregate, which means that these resources are not known to exist in this area in extractable quantities.

Further, the project proposes building no permanent structures precluding the extraction of mineral resources, and involves minimal ground disturbance. Thus implementation of the project will not result in loss of mineral resources or opportunities to extract them. Similarly, the project does not call for extraction of minerals in the course of construction or maintenance. Therefore, the project will have **no impact** on mineral resources or the ability to extract such resources.

4.12. Noise

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?				X

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

Responses:

(a) Noise Standards. Local jurisdictions have not established numerical standards or thresholds for noise levels applicable to the proposed project (City of Lincoln 2008) (Placer County 2009). Project maintenance and operations would continue on a periodic basis and are not expected to generate new or additional sounds above current levels. Therefore, the project would have no impact with regard to noise in excess of established local jurisdictional standards.

Construction between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday are exempt from the provisions of the Placer County noise ordinance, as described in Section 96.36.030 of the Placer County Code, provided that specific equipment requirements are met. These requirements state that all construction equipment shall be fitted with factory-installed muffling devices and all construction equipment shall be maintained in good working order (Placer County 2009). As specified in **APM-NOI-01 Limited Operations** (Section 3.6), noise-generating project activities would be restricted to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. All internal combustion engine-driven equipment would be equipped with intake and exhaust mufflers in good condition and appropriate for the equipment. Project equipment would be maintained in good working order. Thus, project construction activities are exempt from the Placer County noise ordinance.

Applicable requirements of the City of Lincoln's General Plan (2008) are incorporated into the project design as APMs and include:

- Temporary barriers would be used where feasible to screen stationary noise-generating equipment when located in areas adjoining noise sensitive land uses (**APM-NOI-04 Temporary Barriers**); and
- Construction traffic to and from the project site would use designated truck routes (**APM-NOI-05 Construction Traffic**).

Similarly, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requirement for a Lift Plan are incorporated into the project for the two helicopter landing zones within rural lands. PG&E's helicopter vendor will develop and implement a Lift Plan for approval by FAA. The plan for this project would establish flight paths away from populated areas, to the extent feasible, to perform helicopter-required work.

Therefore, there will be **no impacts** associated with potential 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.

(b) Ground Vibration. The project would not introduce groundborne vibration or noise, and these conditions are not present along the project corridor. Therefore, there would be **no impact** associated with groundborne vibration or noise from the project.

(c) Permanent Ambient Noise. Following construction, project operations and maintenance activities will continue and will include periodic facility inspection and equipment replacement. These activities are not expected to generate noise levels above current ambient noise levels in the project vicinity. The project would have **no impact** on permanent noise levels.

(d) Temporary Ambient Noise. Construction of proposed improvements would require a variety of equipment, including trucks, truck-mounted cranes and augers, generators, pneumatic tools, compressors, and helicopters. Equipment would not be operated at night except as necessary for essential safety purposes (e.g., operation of generators as emergency power back-up).

Construction activities would result in noise level increases at receptors along the project alignment. Activities near residential areas would generally be limited to daytime hours between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. Exceptions could occur for safety or logistical reasons, but are not anticipated for this project.

Typical hourly average construction-generated noise would be about 75-85 dBA at 50 feet from the site during busy construction periods, with the highest maximum levels ranging from about 90-94 dBA at 50 feet from the noise source. At times, construction noise levels could exceed 65 dBA L_{eq} at nearby receivers, including residences and schools. Helicopter noise could be up to 80 dBA L_{max} . With implementation of the noise management measures in **APM-NOI-01** through **APM-NOI-05**, increased noise levels would be **less than significant** given the anticipated construction schedule, application of measures described above, and the limited time that particular noise-sensitive receivers would be affected.

(e) Public Airport Noise. The proposed project will take place within the designated overflight space of the Lincoln Regional Airport and will use helicopters for construction. The use of helicopters along the project alignment during construction is considered in the evaluation of construction noise. The proposed project will not include the placement of housing within close proximity of an airport.

As described in the Placer County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, portions of the project corridor between 9th Street and the State Route 65 bypass are located within Zone D of the overflight area. Within this zone, occasional over flights take place, and noise is not considered a compatibility issue (Placer County 1994).

When working on portions of the project corridor within the approach to the Lincoln Regional Airport, PG&E crews will be provided with appropriate personal protection for noise as prescribed by OSHA regulations. For these reasons, there will be a **less-than-significant impact** from the project related to the exposure of persons to public airport related noise.

(f) Private Airstrip Noise. There are no private airstrips within the project area. There will be **no impact** from the project related to the exposure of persons to excessive noise due to proximity to a private airstrip.

4.13. 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)?				X
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X

Responses:

(a) Population Growth. The project proposes minor construction to replace existing power poles and conductor within an existing power line ROW. The proposed project will require a construction crew of 30-40 employees/contractors for construction activities, including one construction monitor. All construction-related workers will commute to the job site from other locations in the Sacramento Valley or temporarily reside in local hotels. The number of employees for operation of the project, following completion of construction, is not anticipated to change from the present level.

Construction activities will be temporary and therefore will not result in any direct growth-inducing impacts, will not result in any increase of local population or housing, and will not indirectly induce

growth by creating new opportunities for local industry or commerce. The project will have **no impact** on population growth.

(b) Housing. The project will use an existing utility corridor and will not require displacement of housing. As noted above, approximately 30-40 construction-related workers will commute to the job site from other locations in the Sacramento Valley or temporarily reside in local hotels. Although construction activities may be timed to avoid biologically significant time periods for sensitive species, the overall construction time will not extend more than one year. Given the small number of hotel units that may be temporarily used, the proposed action is expected to have **no impact** with regard to displacement of housing or need for construction of replacement housing.

(c) Potential Population Displacement. Due to the temporary nature of construction, the availability of a regional workforce, and the small number of workers that will be needed, construction of the proposed project would be expected to have **no impact** on displacement of people or need for creation of housing elsewhere.

4.14. Public Services

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

Responses:

Due to the temporary nature of construction, and availability of a regional workforce, construction of the proposed project is not expected to result in direct population increases. For this reason, construction of the proposed project will not increase demands on parks, schools, utilities, or other government services. Furthermore, as a result of construction practices and precautions, construction of the proposed project is not expected to place undue demands on fire protection or law enforcement services. A review of potential impacts to public services is discussed below.

(a) Fire Protection. The existing power line has a low potential for fire that could be caused by sparks from overhead conductors or direct contact between the conductors and nearby trees and other combustible objects. The improved line will also have a similar small potential for causing fire; there will be no net increase in fire hazard potential over existing conditions.

Construction activities could temporarily increase the demand for fire protection services. However, as described in **APM-HH-06 Risk of Wildfire** (Section 3.6), during the fire season, prior to construction initiation each day, PG&E crew chief(s) will check fire hazard levels for areas where project construction activities are planned to occur and will take the proper precautions to minimize the chance of accidental fires. At times of “moderate” or higher fire hazard, PG&E will implement the following measures in areas of fire danger:

- Water supplies and fire-fighting equipment will be sited in the proposed project area, or in vehicles present at the project site, and be available for fire protection during the fire season.
- PG&E will ensure that vehicles and equipment primarily use existing roads to access work sites, and park away from dry vegetation.
- PG&E will prohibit trash burning and smoking on the project site.

Consequently, the project’s potential impact on local fire protection services is **less than significant**.

(b) Police Protection. The project corridor and adjacent areas are served by the California Highway Patrol, Placer County Sheriff, and the Lincoln Police Department. It is expected that project construction will result in short-term closure of one lane of some adjacent roadways. This could potentially affect police response times. However, PG&E’s development of a traffic diversion plan compliant with Caltrans’ guidelines and applicable county policies for all locations of potential lane closures or width reductions, prior to project construction will prevent excessive congestion or traffic hazards.

There is a small possibility that project construction may require police services due to possible theft of construction equipment and/or vandalism that might occur during the construction period. However, it is PG&E’s practice to take reasonable precautions to prevent theft, such as providing for security service at material storage locations. Additionally, most materials will not be brought on site until required. Based on these construction practices, the probability of construction site theft is low.

Given the short-term nature of project construction, the small workforce required, and the low likelihood of need for, or affect to, police services, the potential for impacts on police services due to project construction is considered **less than significant**, and no provision of new facilities to maintain acceptable police service would be needed.

(c) Schools. The Western Placer Unified School District provides most of the educational services for Placer County and the City of Lincoln. The District maintains eight school facilities, all located in Lincoln: five elementary schools, one intermediate school, one high school, and one continuation high school. The proposed project will be located adjacent to the following schools within the City of Lincoln: Community Christian Pre-School (pre-school and K-8), 1545 First Street; First Street Elementary School (K-5), 1400 First Street; Glen Edwards Middle School (6-8), 204 L Street; and Phoenix High School (Continuation School), 790 J Street.

The short-term increase in the adult population associated with the project’s small construction workforce (crew of 30-40 employees/contractors) will not increase demands on schools. Consequently, the project would be expected to have **no impact** on provision of school services or need for associated facilities.

(d) Parks. Demand for park and recreation services typically positively correlates with population growth. As discussed above, the short-term increase in population due to proposed project construction will be minimal. While some workers may visit parks during off-hours while working in the area, the project’s potential for impact on provision of park-related services and facilities is **less than significant**.

(e) Other Public Facilities. There is a small possibility that construction activities could inadvertently contact underground facilities during pole excavation, possibly leading to temporary service interruptions. To guard against such an event, as described in **APM-PS-01 Underground Service Alert** (Section 3.6), PG&E will ensure that the Underground Service Alert is notified at least 14 days prior to initiation of ground disturbing construction activities. With the implementation of this applicant proposed measure, the potential for project-related impacts to underground facilities is considered **less than significant**.

4.15. Recreation

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities, such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?			X	
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				X
c) Would the project prevent access to an established recreation area during its peak use periods or for more than one year?			X	

Responses:

(a) Parks Facilities Deterioration. The project does not involve additional housing or an increase in population that will place additional demands on existing park use. Some workers may visit parks during off-hours while working in the area. However, the number of workers required for implementation of the project is so modest (30 – 40), and the length of the project so short (four months), that the project’s potential to result in use levels which would cause recreation facility deterioration is **less than significant**.

(b) Recreational Facilities. The project does not include recreational facilities and will have **no impact** on need for construction or expansion of recreational facilities.

(c) Access to an Established Recreation Area.

Bike Paths. Portions of several proposed and existing bike paths throughout the City of Lincoln, including dedicated bicycle/pedestrian paths and bike lanes along roads, will be temporarily used for various construction activities. Many of these are also designated neighborhood electric vehicle (NEV) lanes. Most of these bike and NEV lanes will be used only for purposes of accessing poles; some will be used for additional purposes such as erecting crossing structures and pulling conductor. The construction activities and locations involving bike/NEV pathways and lanes are shown on **Table 4-3**. In cases where the project must temporarily utilize and/or close bike paths, either for purposes of gaining access to construction sites or for purposes of completing site-specific construction activities, bicycle access could be temporarily affected. In these cases, bicycle traffic (and any vehicular traffic) will be rerouted around construction on adjacent lanes of roadways, as specified in Caltrans’ Construction Manual (Caltrans 2001). Such bike paths will not be closed for more than two to three weeks at a time for access or project construction, will not be closed on weekends, and signs will be posted providing information about the expected duration of closures and suggested detours. With the implementation of **APM-REC-01 Project Notification and Signage**, impacts on bike paths will be temporary and **less than significant**.

Table 4-3 Proposed and Existing Bike Paths within the Project Corridor

Bike Path Location	Project Construction Activity/Area
9 th Street (also NEV Lane)	Pull site just west of intersection of 9 th /O streets on Nicolaus Road, pole work along north side of 9 th Street.
5 th Street (also NEV Lane)	Project crosses 5 th Street. Pole replacement at the corner of 5 th /O streets.
3 rd Street (also NEV Lane)	Project crosses 3 rd Street. Pole replacement at the corner of 3 rd /O streets.
Auburn Ravine	Pull site on portions of bicycle path just west of the northernmost border of Auburn Ravine Park at Pole 109.
Joiner Parkway (also NEV Lane)	Project crosses Joiner Parkway. A crossing structure will be temporarily installed at this intersection.
Through Machado Park	No pole replacement is planned for this area. Project activities here will be limited to reconductoring work (i.e., installation of rollers and insulators, moving old and new wire between rollers and insulators, and tensioning the conductor once it is pulled into place).
North end of Danby Lane	Pull site.
South of Downing Circle	No project construction planned for this area.

Bike Path Location	Project Construction Activity/Area
South of Ingram Slough between Groveland Lane	Temporary access road to project area follows bike path.
Ferrari Ranch Road	Project crosses this road. A crossing structure will be temporarily installed at this intersection.
Bike path from Ferrari Ranch Road through Caledon Circle to Orchard Creek Conservation Bank	Pole replacements and pull sites.
Caledon Circle	Project crosses this road. A crossing structure will be temporarily installed at this intersection.

Sources: City of Lincoln 2008b, 2009

Access to Existing Recreational Facilities. Project construction activities will require vehicle access to the poles within/near Auburn Ravine and Machado parks for installation of rollers and insulators. In addition, a portion of the bicycle-pedestrian path which links the parking area at the end of Moore Road to Auburn Ravine Park will be temporarily closed during pulling activities at the pull site at Pole 109. However, a second path to Auburn Ravine Park from Green Ravine Drive, where on-street parking is available, will not be affected. Thus, while access to Auburn Ravine and Machado parks will be affected by the project, affects will be temporary, will not prevent access to the parks, nor be expected to substantially affect park use. The Lincoln High School's and Glen Edwards Elementary and Middle schools' sports fields are located across the street from the project and associated construction areas and will not be affected by project construction. The proposed construction operations will follow a regular work schedule during daylight hours, and no work is proposed during the weekends. A softball field is located at the intersection of Industrial Boulevard and Whitney Boulevard, adjacent to proposed pull sites. Use of these pull sites would not preclude access to the ball-field. For these reasons, and because the construction is temporary in nature, project construction will have a less-than-significant impact on access to recreational facilities.

4.16. Transportation and Traffic

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Cause an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?			X	

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?			X	
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location, which results in substantial safety risks?			X	
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?			X	
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?			X	
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?			X	
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?			X	

Responses:

(a) Traffic Levels. Operation and maintenance of the new power line, when completed, will require occasional vehicle traffic for onsite inspection of each pole on a periodic basis. These inspections will continue as implemented for the existing power line and consequently will have no impact on traffic levels.

Construction activities will be expected to cause some temporary lane closures, and slower driving speeds. Partial lane closures along portions of the project corridor will last for the duration of the installation of components, which will not exceed more than one day in each pole location. The closures will move as the installation progresses. The lanes will be open during non-construction times. The extent of the lane closures will depend on approved traffic plans. No road closures are expected.

Project activities will include the following general types of activities staged from local roadways: vehicle access to some poles; work to reframe, repair, or install new poles; and establishment of pull sites to string new conductor. A short-term increase in traffic could occur on sections of project roads due to occasional temporary lane closures and slower driving speeds as a consequence of construction activities. There could also be a temporary slight increase in vehicular traffic from

project trucks or light-duty vehicles transporting equipment or personnel. Project-related construction will involve the transportation of construction crews, their equipment, and power line materials. It will not generate a substantial number of vehicle trips within the project corridor or region. Typical truck traffic will include periodic delivery of poles, conductor spools, hardware, and heavy equipment. Construction will include the transportation of oversized loads (i.e. poles) along locally designated truck routes to the pole placement sites.

Prior to power line construction, sites will be designated for materials delivery, storage, and lay down. While traffic to and from these areas will increase during project-related construction, the project is not expected to disrupt traffic to residential or commercial developments. Where the project power line is very close to project roads, there will be plans for minimal temporary lane closures to accommodate project construction for pole modifications and pull sites. However, as described in **APM-TRA-01 Temporary Traffic Controls** (Section 3.6) construction activities in, along, and crossing roadways will follow Caltrans' Best Management Practices to minimize impacts to traffic and transportation in the project corridor, as detailed in Caltrans' *California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, Flagging Instruction Handbook, and Traffic Manual* (Caltrans 2006, 2007, and 2004). Therefore, impacts to traffic increases due to temporary lane closures will be **less than significant**.

(b) Level of Service Standards. With the exception of the location where the project crosses State Route 65 near Gladding Road, all roads within the project area that have LOS classifications are currently operating above the LOS threshold. State Route 65 currently exceeds the LOS threshold during peak traffic hours. However, the project will not cause State Route 65 to further exceed the LOS threshold, as there are no plans for lane width reduction or closure of SR 65 associated with project construction. Further, as described in **APM-TRA-01 Temporary Traffic Controls** (Section 3.6), traffic control measures and lane closures will take place as directed by the procedures described in Caltrans' *California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, Flagging Instruction Handbook, Manual of Traffic Controls for Maintenance and Work Zones, and Traffic Manual* (Caltrans 2006, 2007, 2003, and 2004, respectively). Because of the temporary nature of the project, and the limited increase in traffic, LOS thresholds will not be exceeded due to project-related construction, and impacts will be **less than significant**.

(c) Air Traffic. Addressed in the Hazards discussion.

(d) Traffic Hazards. Short-term traffic disruption could occur due to occasional temporary lane closures as a consequence of construction activities. Construction will occur over a period of four months. During this time, lane closures will occur as needed for the replacement and modification of poles and the use of pull sites, but will not exceed one week for each 0.5 mile segment of roadway. The pull sites are located under the existing power line, or on the adjacent paved road, farm road, or road shoulder, as feasible, but some sites will require lane width reductions or closures. There are five possible lane closures on streets within the City of Lincoln (9TH Street, O Street, Danby Court, Danby Lane, and Sorrento Parkway), and one within the County of Placer (Athens Avenue), associated with pull site locations. Caltrans' Construction Manual requires temporary traffic control planning "any time the normal function of a roadway is suspended" (Caltrans 2009). To prevent excessive congestion or traffic hazards during lane closures, PG&E will develop traffic diversion plans compliant with Caltrans' guidelines and city and county policies for all locations of potential lane closures or width reductions prior to project construction. As well, as described in **APM-TRA-01 Temporary Traffic Controls** (Section 3.6), PG&E will obtain all necessary transportation and/or encroachment permits from Caltrans, in accordance with the Caltrans Transportation Permit and

Encroachment Permit manuals, prior to project construction, including those for transport of oversized loads and certain materials. In addition, construction activities in, along, and crossing roadways will follow Caltrans BMPs to minimize impacts to traffic and transportation in the project area, as detailed in Caltrans' *California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, Flagging Instruction Handbook; Manual of Traffic Controls for Maintenance and Work Zones; and Traffic Manual* (Caltrans 2006, 2007, 2003, and 2004).

Because closures will be consistent with city and county policies and State regulations, and will be temporary in nature, impacts associated with traffic hazards due to temporary lane closures will be **less than significant** and mitigation is not required.

(e) Emergency Access. Emergency access could be negatively affected by short-term traffic disruption caused by occasional temporary lane closures and slower driving speeds as a consequence of construction activities. Lane closures will occur as needed for the replacement and modification of poles and the use of pull sites. Traffic control will be provided where necessary, and PG&E will follow Caltrans BMPs to minimize impacts to traffic and transportation. In the event of an emergency, PG&E will halt activities and remove equipment from affected roads as needed. With these measures, impacts to emergency access will be **less than significant**.

(f) Parking. Temporary lane width reductions or closures on Danby Court and Danby Lane within the City of Lincoln could interfere with neighborhood parking during project construction. Also, as noted above, project construction activities will require vehicle access to the poles within/near Auburn Ravine Park for installation of rollers and insulators. Temporarily closing a portion of the bicycle-pedestrian path at the pull site at Pole 109 for pulling activities will be necessary as well. Because this path links the approximately 14-vehicle parking area at the end of Moore Road to Auburn Ravine Park, park visitors who would normally park at this location would be expected to park at an alternative location. A close alternative, a second path to Auburn Ravine Park from Green Ravine Drive, appears to have plenty of on-street parking capacity along Green Ravine Drive to accommodate these vehicles. The longest that any roadway lane or bicycle-pedestrian path will be closed for the project is one week, while conducting takes place. Where construction activities occur within residential areas, PG&E will likely close the lane, and restrict parking on a block-by-block basis. Residents will need to park in alternate, nearby available areas during these periods. However, parking is not extremely limited in the affected residential areas. Further, as described in **APM-TRA-02 Traffic and Parking Coordination** (Section 3.6), PG&E will post signs about lane/path closures as directed by City of Lincoln, Placer County, and Caltrans permits. Consequently, impacts to parking capacity are considered **less than significant**.

(g) Alternative Transportation. Project construction will temporarily utilize small segments of roads that are designated for NEV lanes, bicycles, and public transit. As mentioned above, PG&E will follow Caltrans' Best Management Practices to minimize impacts to traffic and transportation in the project area. As well, project construction will temporarily close portions of one of the bicycle-pedestrian paths connecting to Auburn Ravine Park. Alternative transportation will be temporarily rerouted around the construction along with other traffic in the area. Impacts to alternative transportation will be **less than significant**.

4.17. Utilities and Service Systems

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?				X
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?				X
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?				X
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?				X
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves, or may serve, the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?				X
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?			X	
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?			X	

(a) Wastewater Treatment. Wastewater disposal will not be required, because the water used during dust suppression activities will be minimal. Further, this water will evaporate or be absorbed into the ground. In addition, construction crews will use portable toilets located at staging areas. The material in the portable toilets will be disposed of via septic tank or appropriate wastewater

treatment plant off site, in compliance with the requirements of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. Concrete truck washout water will be contained and reused in mixing additional concrete. No other sources of wastewater are anticipated during the proposed project. Given the limited amount of water that will be used during construction or operation, impacts on wastewater treatment facilities are not anticipated. The project will not exceed wastewater treatment requirements and will have **no impact** on these requirements.

(b) Wastewater Facilities. The small amount of water used and wastewater generated by the proposed project can be easily serviced from various existing sources within the project area. The proposed project will not trigger a need to add capacity to the existing municipal wastewater treatment system, and will therefore have **no impact** on these systems.

(c) Storm Water Facilities. The proposed project will not require, or result in the construction of, new or expanded storm drain facilities. The proposed use of pole installation sites, work areas, pull and tension sites, staging areas, and access roads required for the proposed project is not anticipated to result in a net increase in impervious surfaces. No new temporary access roads will be constructed. Operations and maintenance conditions of the facilities post-construction will be very similar to the existing conditions. For these reasons, the proposed project will have **no impact** on storm water drainage facilities.

(d) Water Supply. The primary use of water during construction of the proposed project will be for dust suppression measures on access roads. The water that will be required for construction activities will be trucked in from off-site. PG&E will obtain permits from the appropriate county/city agency and water district to fill water trucks by hooking them up to fire hydrants within the specific local jurisdiction. Working crews will bring in bottled drinking water from off-site. A small amount of water will also be maintained on site for fire suppression. Because water use will primarily be limited to use as necessary to control dust on access roads, the amount of water used for construction will be minimal: water use for dust and fire suppression is not expected to exceed 600 gallons per day. For these reasons, the proposed project will have **no impact** on existing water supplies, and new or expended entitlements will not be needed.

(e) Wastewater Capacity. Centralized wastewater treatment services are available within the City of Lincoln, the closest source to the project corridor. Water use and wastewater generated by the proposed project will be minimal, and can be easily supplied and serviced from various sources within the project area, without construction of additional facilities. During project-related construction, water use for dust and fire suppression is not expected to exceed 600 gallons per day. For these reasons, the proposed project will have **no impact** on wastewater services.

(f) Solid Waste. Solid waste in the project vicinity is disposed of at the Western Regional Sanitary Landfill located southwest of Lincoln and west of State Route 65. The facility is operated by the Western Placer Waste Management Authority via a joint powers agreement among the cities of Lincoln, Rocklin, Roseville, and Placer County. This landfill presently has an estimated remaining capacity suitable for continued use to 2013; however, planned expansion of the landfill and implementation of state recycling programs could extend the useful life of the landfill beyond the year 2047 (City of Lincoln 2008).

Waste material generated by the project will primarily consist of used wooden power line poles. Removed used poles will be taken to an off-site PG&E Service Center and stored there for further use or disposed of off-site in a properly classed landfill. Old insulators will be removed from the

existing poles and will either be disposed of in the appropriate landfill or recycled. Wooden pallets used during construction will be recycled.

Old conductors will be salvaged. Wood poles used for guard and crossing structures will be reused by PG&E for other projects. For these reasons, the impacts of the proposed project on solid waste disposal needs will be **less than significant**.

(g) Solid Waste Regulatory Compliance. Placer County and the City of Lincoln have adopted Countywide Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE) plans that establish goals and methodologies for compliance with California Assembly Bill 939, adopted in 1989, which requires a fifty percent diversion of solid waste from landfills (CIWMB 2009). The California Integrated Waste Management Board’s Recycling Market Development Zone program helps each county meet this goal. Because the proposed project will generate only a small volume of waste material on a short-term basis, and will comply with federal, State, and local statutes, the proposed project will have a **less-than-significant** impact on solid waste disposal.

4.18. Mandatory Findings of Significance

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

Responses:

(a) Environmental Quality. The construction of the proposed project will include construction-related disturbances during the construction period at discrete locations along the project corridor. Application of the proposed APMs and MMs will manage these disturbances and the potential project-related effects to a level that is **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**. Therefore, the project will not significantly degrade the quality of the environment.

As a result of the project, some habitat along the project corridor will be disturbed during construction. The removal of old poles will also cause some temporary disturbances. Temporary disturbances to habitat will be addressed with measures to return disturbed sites to pre-project conditions. For work in vernal pool habitat potentially supporting vernal pool fairy shrimp and vernal pool tadpole shrimp, PG&E will compensate for net losses in habitat with the purchase of credits as required by the USFWS programmatic biological opinion issued under Section 7 consultation (see **MM-BIO-01**, Section 3.6). PG&E will also conduct construction activities as directed by avoidance and minimization measures issued in the PBO for these vernal pool species, as prescribed for this project by the USFWS. The project also includes a variety of measures to address water quality, nesting birds, and protection of wildlife habitat. For these reasons, the project will not 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, or reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal. A small amount of wetland will be removed by the project as well. In keeping with the regulatory requirements of the Clean Water Act, PG&E has reviewed the proposed project with the ACOE, and based on this consultation will compensate for the permanent loss of wetlands as a part of the project (see **MM-BIO-03**, Section 3.6). Consequently, project impacts on these resources will be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

Surveys of the project area did not identify cultural resources related to California history or prehistory. However, subsurface archeological resources associated with the Native American occupation of the area and/or Euro-American settlement of the area are potentially present and could be unearthed during excavations for new installation, particularly near natural drainages. Consequently, the project includes measures to address the discovery of cultural materials during project excavations, including evaluation and agency consultation on these finds. Therefore, the project is unlikely to eliminate periods of important California history or prehistory and will have a **less-than-significant** impact on cultural resources.

(b) Cumulative Impacts. Future operation and maintenance (O&M) activities for the proposed project will not differ substantially from those O&M activities associated with operation of the currently existing power line. No cumulative impacts would be expected to result from operation of the new power line.

Impacts associated with the proposed project include short-term disturbances associated with construction activities and changes to the project area that are permanent alterations of the existing project setting. Following construction, there will be a minor net loss of habitat and altered visual changes on the landscape. The project includes compensation for loss of wetlands and vernal pool habitat potentially supporting vernal pool fairy shrimp and vernal pool tadpole shrimp. Project construction is expected to generate short-term emissions of greenhouse gases and pollutants regulated by local air quality management districts. However, with implementation of the APMs, net emissions will pose a negligible increase over existing conditions and are not expected to contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation or the non-attainment for a

monitored criteria pollutant. The replacement of the existing poles and conductors represent relatively minor incremental changes to the existing landscape setting.

The incremental impact of the project, when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable, probable future projects, will not contribute to cumulative impacts on project-related resources. Most of the other projects identified as potentially occurring within the same timeframe are at least 0.5 miles away. Further, these projects would be expected to implement minimization measures similar to those incorporated into the proposed project (see Applicant Proposed Measures, Section 3.6), including meeting air quality requirements, coordinating work activities with the responsible agencies, and implementing applicable BMPs and mitigation measures. Consequently, the project's potential to result in cumulatively considerable impacts is **less than significant**.

(c) Human Beings. During project construction, APMs will be implemented to manage air emissions, hazardous materials, hazards, noise, recreation, traffic, visual changes, and water quality. These measures will ensure worker and public safety and minimize construction-related disturbances. PG&E will also comply with federal, State, and local regulations and abide by permit conditions issued for this project. Therefore, project impacts on human beings are expected to be limited to short-term, minor construction disturbances, which are within the range of conditions allowed by federal, State, and local regulations. Consequently, project impacts on human beings are expected to be **less than significant**.

5.0 Initial Study Preparers

This Initial Study was prepared for the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board by Garcia and Associates (GANDA) with supporting materials provided by Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Environmental Vision, and Illingworth and Rodkin.

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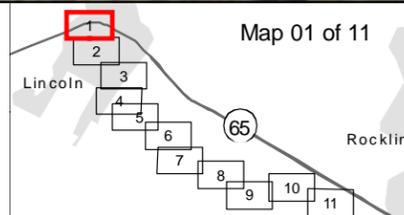
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Appendix A
Project Maps



Map 01 of 11

Existing pole to be used in place	Fly Site	Parks
Existing pole to be removed	Pull Site	Schools
Proposed new pole location	Railroads	New pole
Power Line	Substation	Existing pole
Access Route	Orchard Creek Conservation Bank	

Pole locations are approximate, preliminary and subject to change with final engineering and other factors.

0 125 250 375 500 ft

0 50 100 150 m

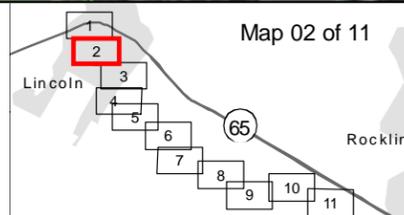
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One in = 250 ft

T12N R06E Sec 10
USGS 7.5' Quad: LINCOLN

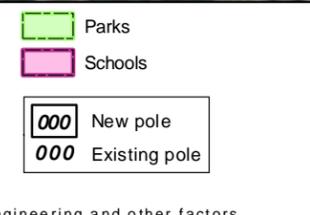
**Lincoln-Pleasant Grove
115 kV Reconductoring Project**

Map 01 of 11

Placer County, California
January 2011

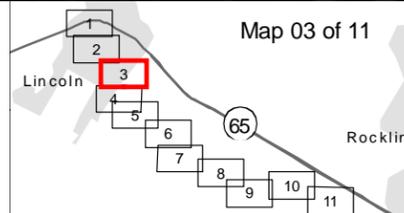
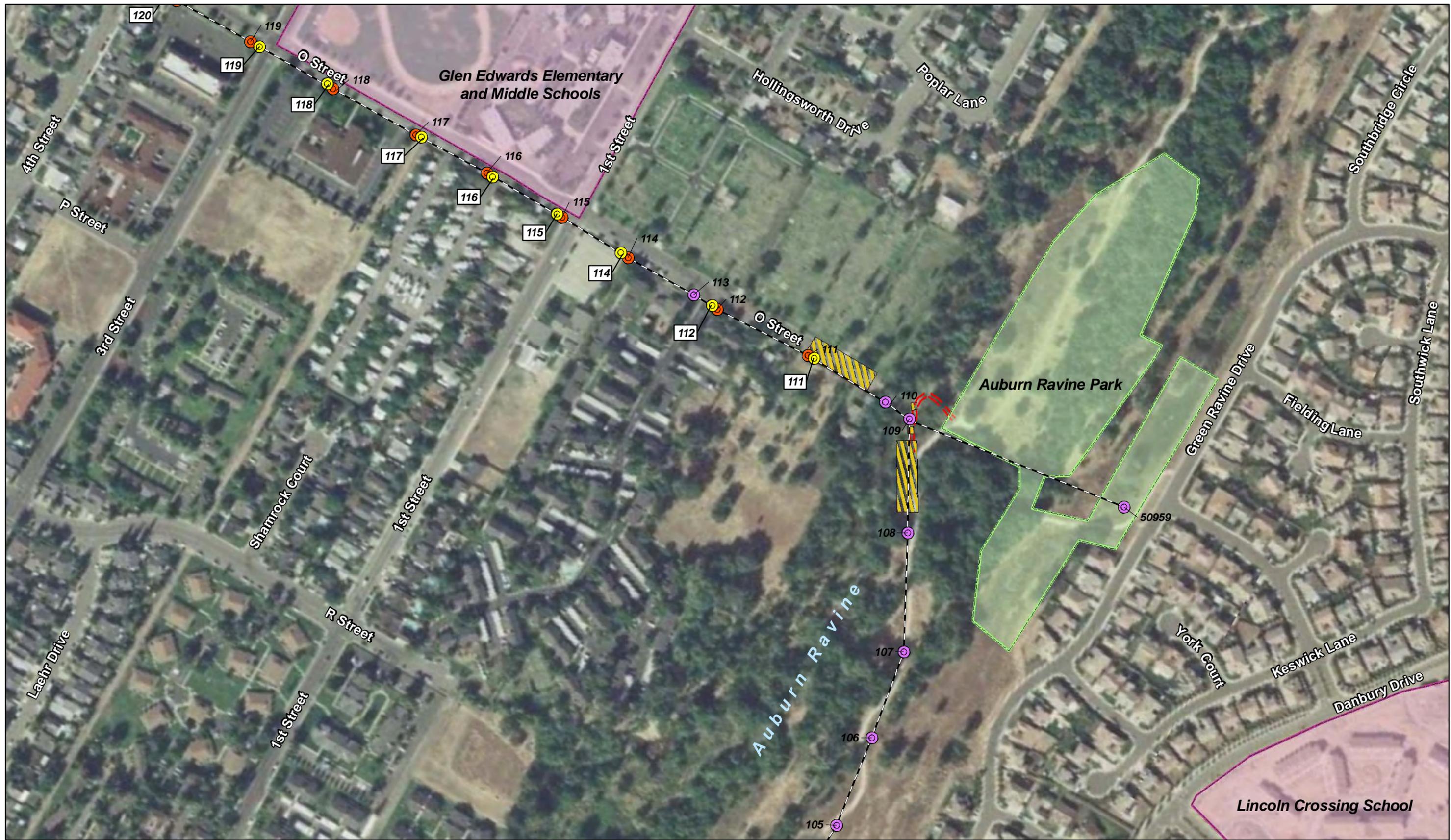


- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Existing pole to be used in place | Fly Site | Parks |
| Existing pole to be removed | Pull Site | Schools |
| Proposed new pole location | Railroads | New pole |
| Power Line | Substation | Existing pole |
| Access Route | Orchard Creek Conservation Bank | |
- Pole locations are approximate, preliminary and subject to change with final engineering and other factors.



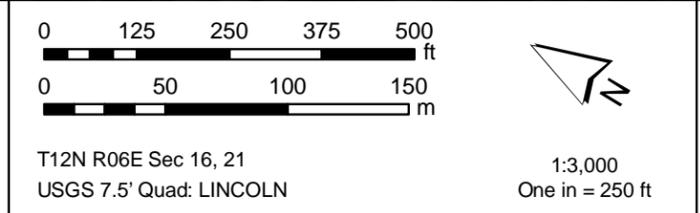
T12N R06E Sec 10, 15, 16
 USGS 7.5' Quad: LINCOLN
 1:3,000
 One in = 250 ft

**Lincoln-Pleasant Grove
 115 kV Reconductoring Project**
 Map 02 of 11
 Placer County, California
 January 2011



- Existing pole to be used in place
- Existing pole to be removed
- Proposed new pole location
- Power Line
- Access Route
- Fly Site
- Pull Site
- Railroads
- Substation
- Orchard Creek Conservation Bank

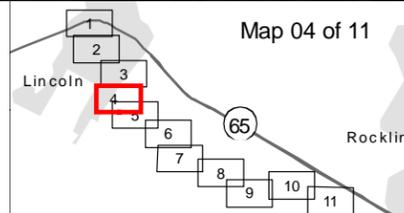
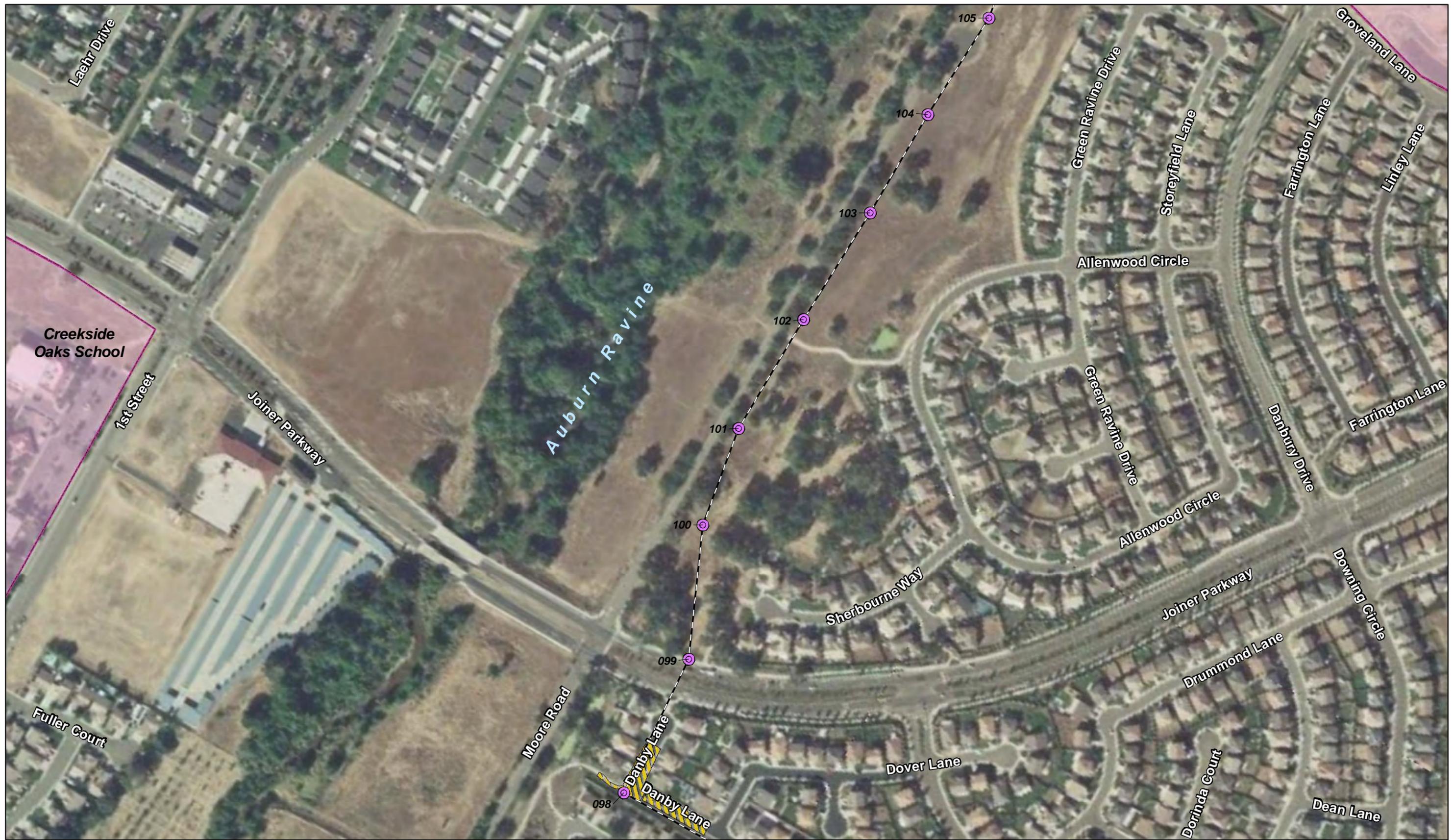
- Parks
- Schools
- New pole
- Existing pole



**Lincoln-Pleasant Grove
115 kV Reconductoring Project**

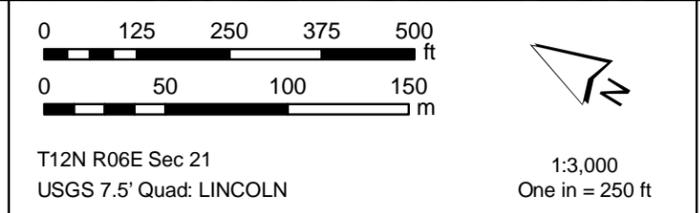
Map 03 of 11
Placer County, California
January 2011

Pole locations are approximate, preliminary and subject to change with final engineering and other factors.



- Existing pole to be used in place
- Existing pole to be removed
- Proposed new pole location
- Power Line
- Access Route
- Fly Site
- Pull Site
- Railroads
- Substation
- Orchard Creek Conservation Bank

- Parks
- Schools
- New pole
- Existing pole



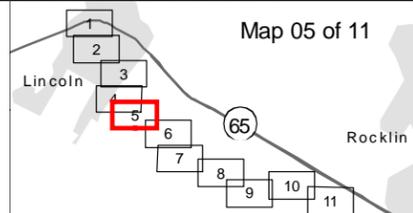
**Lincoln-Pleasant Grove
115 kV Reconductoring Project**

Map 04 of 11
Placer County, California
January 2011

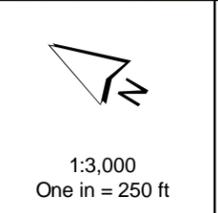
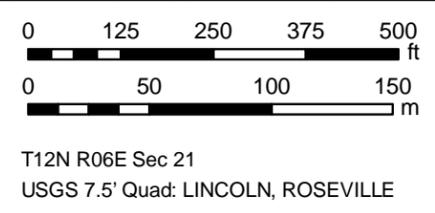
Pole locations are approximate, preliminary and subject to change with final engineering and other factors.



Access route via intersection of Groveland Lane and Joiner Parkway

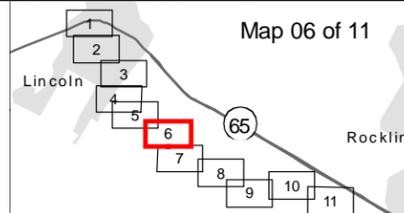
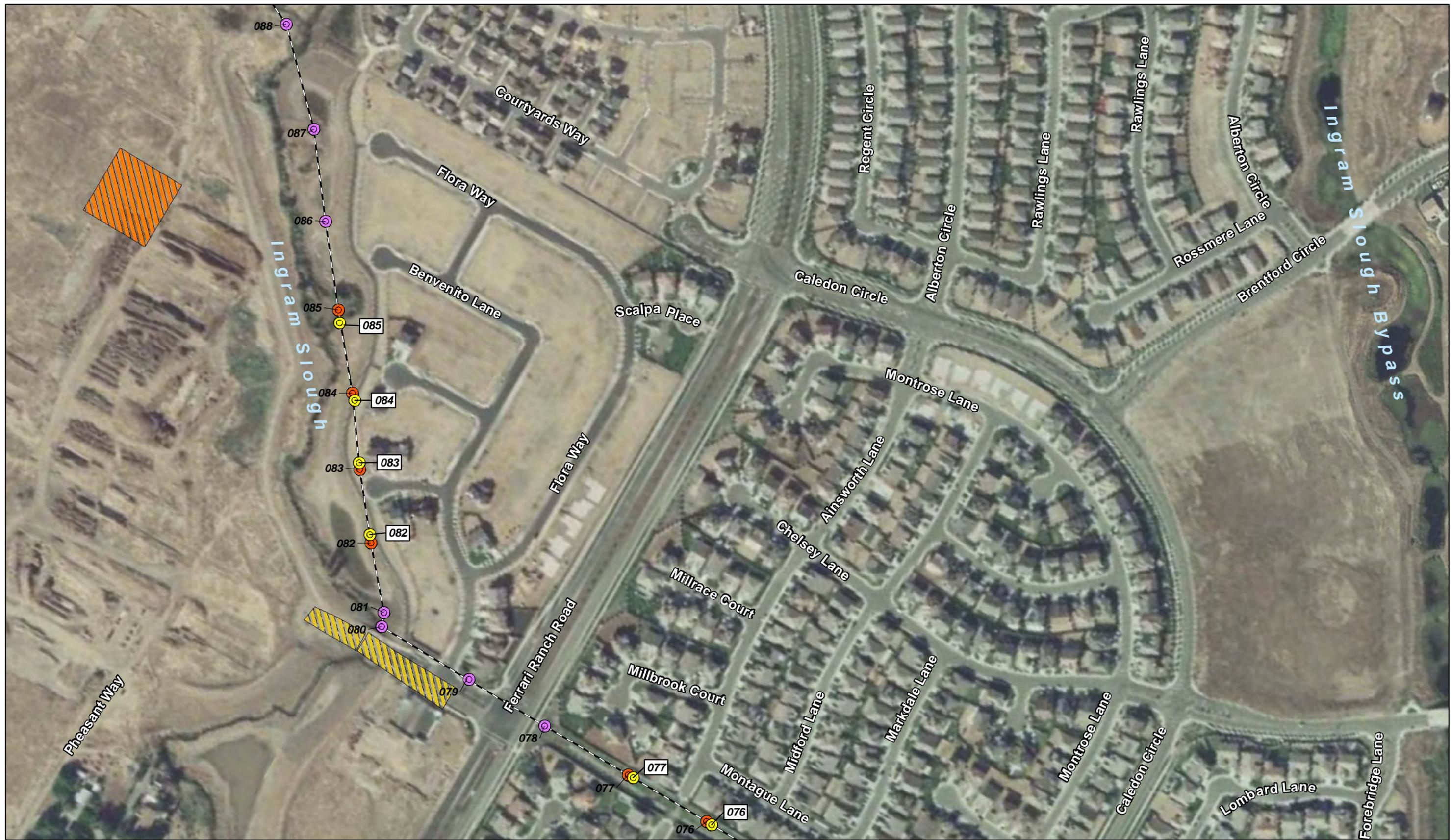


- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Existing pole to be used in place | Fly Site | Parks |
| Existing pole to be removed | Pull Site | Schools |
| Proposed new pole location | Railroads | New pole |
| Power Line | Substation | Existing pole |
| Access Route | Orchard Creek Conservation Bank | |
- Pole locations are approximate, preliminary and subject to change with final engineering and other factors.



**Lincoln-Pleasant Grove
115 kV Reconducting Project**

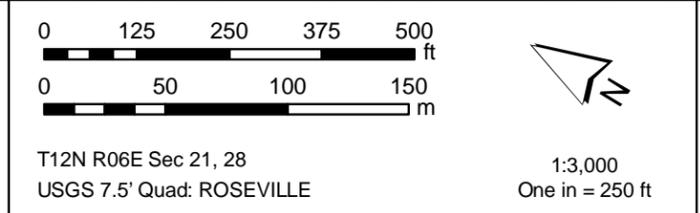
Map 05 of 11
Placer County, California
January 2011



Map 06 of 11

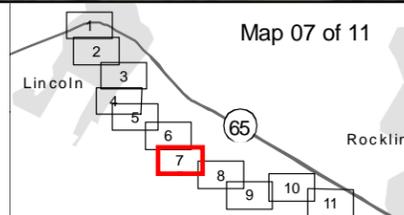
Existing pole to be used in place	Fly Site	Parks
Existing pole to be removed	Pull Site	Schools
Proposed new pole location	Railroads	New pole
Power Line	Substation	Existing pole
Access Route	Orchard Creek Conservation Bank	

Pole locations are approximate, preliminary and subject to change with final engineering and other factors.



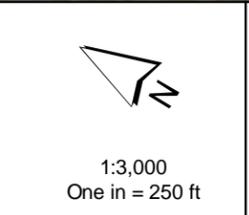
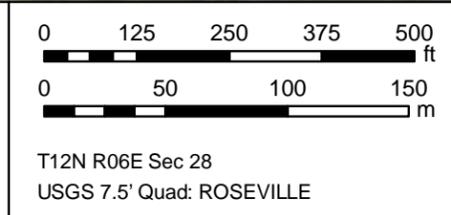
**Lincoln-Pleasant Grove
115 kV Reconductoring Project**

Map 06 of 11
Placer County, California
January 2011



- Existing pole to be used in place
- Existing pole to be removed
- Proposed new pole location
- Power Line
- == Access Route
- Fly Site
- Pull Site
- Railroads
- Substation
- Orchard Creek Conservation Bank

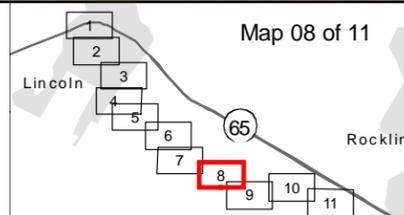
- 000 New pole
- 000 Existing pole
- Parks
- Schools



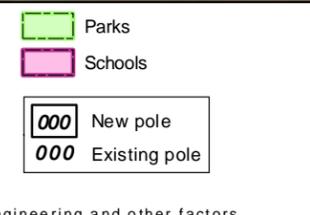
**Lincoln-Pleasant Grove
115 kV Reconductoring Project**

Map 07 of 11
Placer County, California
January 2011

Pole locations are approximate, preliminary and subject to change with final engineering and other factors.



- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Existing pole to be used in place | Fly Site | Parks |
| Existing pole to be removed | Pull Site | Schools |
| Proposed new pole location | Railroads | New pole |
| Power Line | Substation | Existing pole |
| Access Route | Orchard Creek Conservation Bank | |
- Pole locations are approximate, preliminary and subject to change with final engineering and other factors.

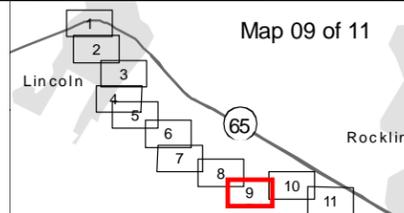
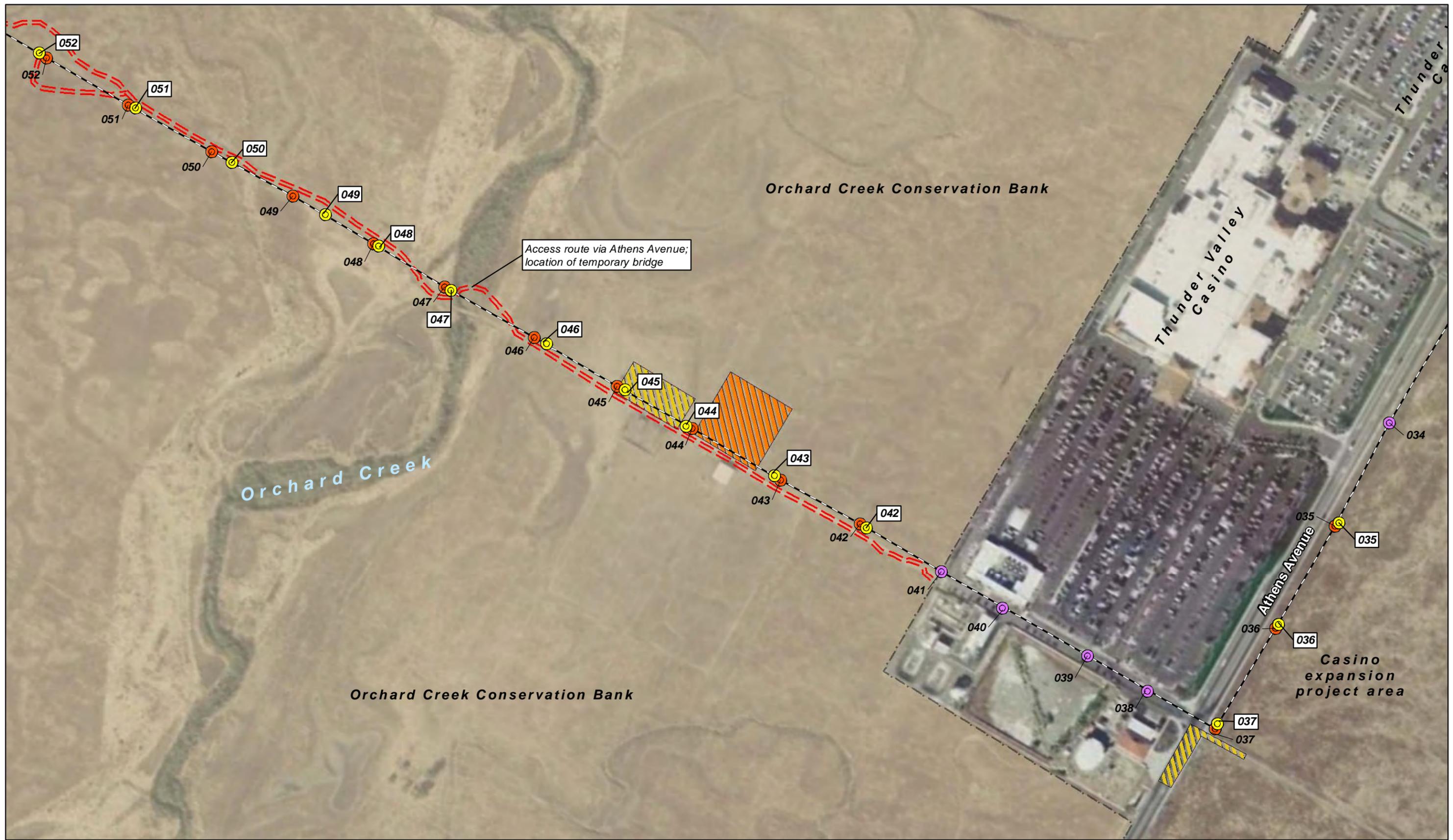


T12N R06E Sec 28, 33
USGS 7.5' Quad: ROSEVILLE

1:3,000
One in = 250 ft

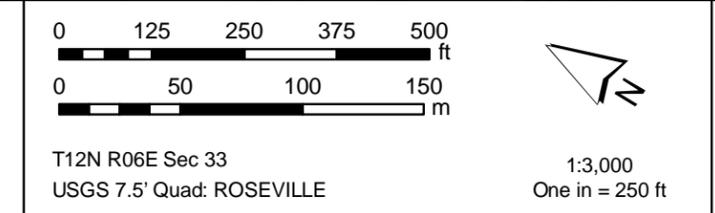
**Lincoln-Pleasant Grove
115 kV Reconductoring Project**

Map 08 of 11
Placer County, California
January 2011



- Existing pole to be used in place
- Existing pole to be removed
- Proposed new pole location
- Power Line
- == Access Route
- Fly Site
- Pull Site
- Railroads
- Substation
- Orchard Creek Conservation Bank

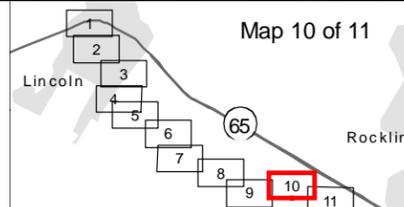
- Parks
- Schools
- New pole
- Existing pole



**Lincoln-Pleasant Grove
115 kV Reconductoring Project**

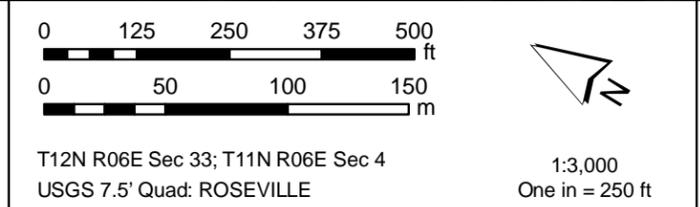
Map 09 of 11
Placer County, California
January 2011

Pole locations are approximate, preliminary and subject to change with final engineering and other factors.



- Map 10 of 11
- Existing pole to be used in place
 - Existing pole to be removed
 - Proposed new pole location
 - Power Line
 - == Access Route
 - Fly Site
 - Pull Site
 - Railroads
 - Substation
 - Orchard Creek Conservation Bank

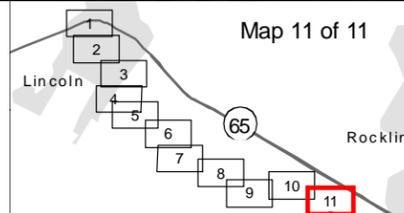
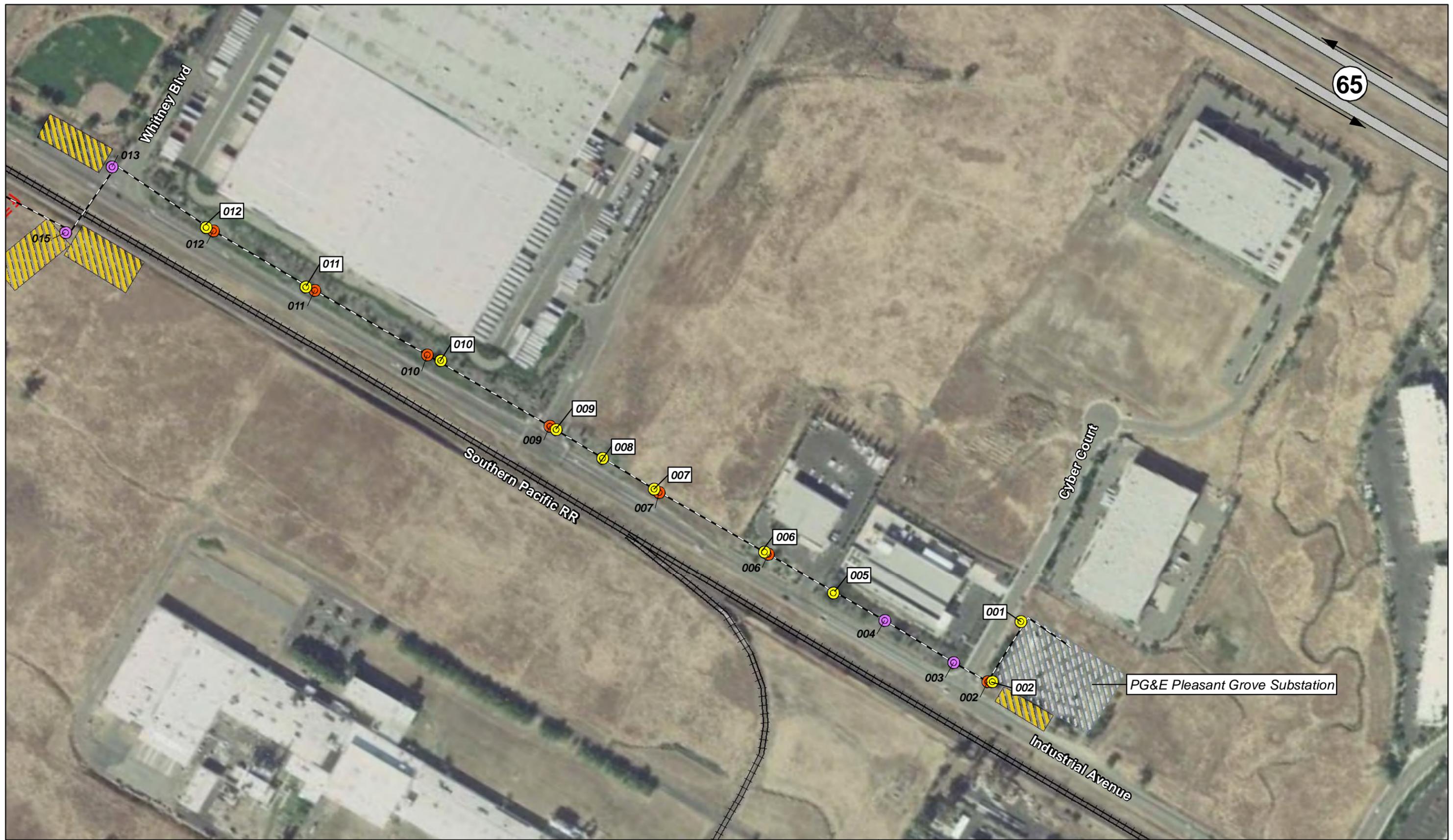
- Parks
- Schools
- New pole
- Existing pole



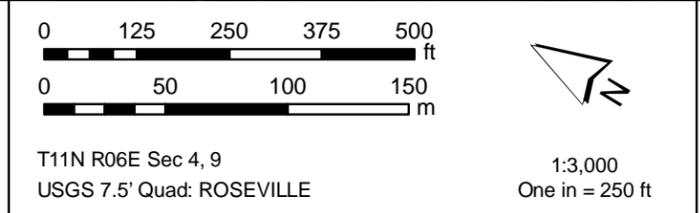
**Lincoln-Pleasant Grove
115 kV Reconductoring Project**

Map 10 of 11
Placer County, California
January 2011

Pole locations are approximate, preliminary and subject to change with final engineering and other factors.



- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Existing pole to be used in place | Fly Site | Parks |
| Existing pole to be removed | Pull Site | Schools |
| Proposed new pole location | Railroads | New pole |
| Power Line | Substation | Existing pole |
| Access Route | Orchard Creek Conservation Bank | |
- Pole locations are approximate, preliminary and subject to change with final engineering and other factors.



**Lincoln-Pleasant Grove
115 kV Reconductoring Project**

Map 11 of 11
Placer County, California
January 2011