



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Certificate of Determination Exemption from Environmental Review

Case No.: 2012.0939E
Project Title: Edgewood Station Valve Automation
Project Sponsor: Kristina Zaccardelli, Pacific Gas and Electric Company
(925) 459-3614
Staff Contact: Chris Kern, Environmental Planning
(415) 575-9037
chris.kern@sfgov.org

1650 Mission St.
Suite 400
San Francisco,
CA 94103-2479

Reception:
415.558.6378

Fax:
415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) proposes to upgrade existing equipment at the Edgewood Valve Station to improve the operational safety of PG&E's natural gas transmission system as required by the California Public Utilities Commission. The project site is located on San Francisco Public Utilities (SFPUC) Peninsula Watershed lands near Highway 280 and Edgewood Road in San Mateo County. The project would provide remote monitoring and control, automatic valve shutdown and inline inspection capabilities and other safety enhancements as further described below.

EXEMPT STATUS:


Categorical Exemption, Class 1 (California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15301)

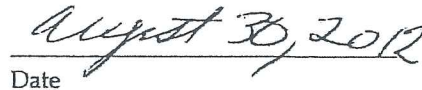
REMARKS:

The proposed project would consist of minor alteration of existing facilities used to provide natural gas service involving negligible expansion of use and would not have a significant effect on the environment. See next page.

DETERMINATION:

I do hereby certify that the above determination has been made pursuant to State and local requirements.


Bill Wycko
Environmental Review Officer


Date

cc: Robert Stiving, PG&E
Tim Ramirez, SFPUC Natural Resources Division
Irina Torrey, SFPUC BEM

Virna Byrd, M.D.F.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (continued):

The California Public Utilities Commission has required PG&E to automate certain valves to improve the safety of its natural gas transmission system. Accordingly, the proposed project would involve replacement of existing valves, installation of new SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) equipment, pressure transmitters, over-pressure protection, in-line inspection facilities, and fencing. A small thermal electric generator would be installed at the valve station to provide power to the automatic shutdown and monitoring equipment.

The existing Edgewood Valve Station is located within a 2,500 square-foot gravel-covered pad surrounded by an eight-foot high security fence and consists of existing above-ground valve facilities (see attached photographs). The valve station contains no vegetation or native habitat. The site is subject to regular disturbance for fire suppression and maintenance activities. While most of the proposed work would occur within the existing gravel-covered valve station, PG&E proposes to enlarge the valve station by approximately 2,000 square feet to provide for new in-line pipeline inspection capability and is requesting SFPUC approval to expand its utility easement by approximately 3,000 square feet as part of the project. Approximately 1,000 cubic yards of material would be excavated for three retaining walls. Construction equipment and materials would be staged in an approximately 58,300-square-foot previously disturbed area directly adjacent to Highway 280. Access to the project site would be either from Canada Road via an existing 4,400-foot long dirt road (Option A) or from the proposed staging area via an approximately 425-foot long new temporary access route (Option B).

Temporary construction activities would involve minor grading, excavation and backfilling for installation of new valves, welding, installation of fencing, and site restoration. Construction equipment would include two track hoes, one front end loader and one dump truck. Project construction is anticipated to take approximately three months.

REMARKS (continued):**Exempt Status**

CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, or Class 1, provides for an exemption from environmental review for operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment or topographical features involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination. CEQA Guidelines Section 15301(b) specifically applies to existing facilities of both investor and publicly-owned utilities used to provide electric power, natural gas, sewerage or other public utility services. The proposed project would involve minor alteration of existing mechanical equipment and facilities used to provide natural gas utility service involving negligible expansion of use, and is therefore within the range of activities properly exempted pursuant to Class 1.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 lists exceptions to the use of categorical exemptions. The exceptions include that an exemption shall not be used where the project would result in a significant cumulative impact (Section 15300.2(b)), where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity would have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances (Section 15300.2(c)), for a project that may result in damage to scenic resources within a state designated scenic highway (Section 15300.2(d)), or

where the project would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource (Section 15300.2(f)). As described below, there are no conditions associated with the proposed project that would suggest the possibility of a significant environmental effect.

Biological Resources

The SFPUC Peninsula Watershed lands contain significant biological resources, including special-status wildlife and plant species and sensitive habitats. According to biological resources and rare plant surveys conducted for the project, the project site, including the valve lot, staging area, and both access road options, does not support special-status species and does not contain riparian habitat, wetlands or other sensitive natural communities.¹² The majority of the project would occur within previously disturbed areas. The proposed permanent removal of up to 0.25 square feet of northern coyote brush scrub and annual grassland to expand the valve lot and the temporary disturbance of 0.15 square feet of annual grassland for a construction access road (Option B) would have a negligible effect on these common vegetation communities and would not result in a substantial adverse effect on any special-status species or sensitive habitat. Therefore, the project as proposed would not have a significant effect on biological resources due to unusual circumstances.

For the reasons stated above, the project as sited and designed would not have a significant effect on biological resources. Furthermore, PG&E proposes to implement various avoidance and minimization measures designed to minimize site disturbance during project construction, to prevent construction vehicles and equipment from inadvertently operating outside of the construction and staging areas, and to provide for restoration of areas temporarily disturbed during construction.

The SFPUC has indicated that in accordance with its standard conditions of approval for PG&E's Watershed Access Permit, the project must be undertaken in strict conformity with the project description contained in PG&E's permit application. The SFPUC will monitor project construction to ensure compliance with the approved permit, including implementation of the proposed avoidance and minimization measures.

Scenic Resources

Highway 280 in the project vicinity is a state designated scenic highway. The Edgewood Valve Lot is located approximately 300 feet west of Highway 280, and the proposed construction staging area is directly adjacent to the highway. The proposed enlargement of the valve lot would result in a negligible change in the appearance of this existing facility. Following completion of construction, temporarily disturbed areas would be restored and revegetated. Neither the minor modifications to the existing valve

¹ California Department of Fish and Game, California Natural Diversity Database for 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle of *Montara Mountain*, and *Woodside*, queried August 2012. The results of this records search are available for review at the Planning Department, 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, CA as part of Case File No. 2012.0939E.

² Vegetation Mapping, prepared by GANDA, December 2011. This document is available for review at the Planning Department, 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, CA as part of Case File No. 2012.0939E.