



MEMORANDUM

Public Works Department

DATE: January 19, 2022

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Martin Boyd, Associate Civil Engineer
Edward Arango, Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer

SUBJECT: PG&E Gas Regulator Station at San Veron Park—Heritage Tree Removal and Mitigation

RECOMMENDATION

Review the proposed mitigation for Heritage tree removals to install a new PG&E Gas Regulator Station at San Veron Park and forward a recommendation to the City Council to approve the staff-recommended removal and mitigation for two Heritage trees at a 2:1 tree replacement ratio with 24" box trees.

BACKGROUND

As part of Pacific Gas and Electric Company's (PG&E) ongoing gas safety project to ensure the continued safe and reliable delivery of natural gas in Mountain View, PG&E identifies and performs upgrades and replacements to their facilities. One of these facilities is the existing gas regulator station (GRS) located in the median on the west side of the intersection on West Middlefield Road at North Shoreline Boulevard (see Figure 1). The GRS has reached the end of its useful life, and PG&E will be upgrading the GRS to meet current safety standards. The GRS reduces pressure in the large transmission pipeline so that gas can feed into smaller PG&E distribution system lines to provide gas service directly to homes and businesses.



Figure 1: Location of Existing GRS

ANALYSIS

City and PG&E staff reviewed the existing and other feasible locations in the area for installation of the GRS that meets key criteria for both agencies, including minimizing Heritage tree removals, allowing simple facility access, meeting worker safety needs, and providing a location in close proximity to the existing gas transmission main and distribution line. Through an assessment of the immediate area, staff looked for options near or within San Veron Park that met the criteria above. The northwest corner of San Veron Park was identified as the recommended location, meeting the criteria with the least impacts within the park. This location minimizes tree removals; is away from the more prominent, visual, and active playground and grass areas of the park; and provides safe access to the GRS by PG&E staff (see Figure 2). The GRS will have visible elements, including utility vaults, vent stacks, a cabinet, a solar pole, and a 4' retaining wall located behind the facilities (see Attachment 1). The retaining wall is needed to meet PG&E requirements to maintain a flat grade behind the sidewalk for the utility vaults and to

preserve the remaining trees by avoiding additional conform grading. PG&E will maintain the GRS and retaining wall. Attachment 2 outlines the proposed site plan.



Figure 2: Location of the Proposed GRS in San Veron Park

Installation of the GRS at this location will require the removal of two Heritage trees and three non-Heritage trees (see Table 1 and Figure 3). All tree replacements are proposed in San Veron Park (see Figure 4). The two Heritage trees will be replaced at a 2:1 ratio with 24" box trees, and the three non-Heritage trees will be replaced at a 1:1 ratio with 24" box trees. Attachment 3 shows photos of the trees to be removed.

Table 1: Proposed Tree Removals at San Veron Park

	Tree Diameter at 54" Above Grade	Height	Heritage Tree	Tree Type
1	30"	35'	Yes	Pine
2	22"	15'	No	Purple Leaf Plum
3	12"	20'	Yes	Redwood
4	6"	12'	No	Ginkgo
5	6"	12'	No	Ginkgo



Figure 3: Proposed Tree Removals at San Veron Park



Figure 4: Proposed Tree Replacements at San Veron Park

Project Alternative

Staff evaluated an alternative of upgrading the GRS at its current location in the median on West Middlefield Road and recommends the location at San Veron Park for several reasons. The location of the GRS in the median island poses safety risks from traffic collisions for both the GRS equipment and PG&E workers servicing the GRS, including maintenance vehicles parked in the adjacent travel lanes to access the GRS. Vertical barrier installation within the median would be necessary for worker safety and equipment protection, providing an additional visual impact. The location at San Veron Park provides safer access and worker conditions being located outside the roadway area.

The GRS upgrade also requires a larger footprint for the facilities, resulting in removal of the three large median Heritage trees necessary to accommodate the GRS in the median (see Table 2 and Figure 5). Photos of the three Heritage trees in the West Middlefield Road median are shown in Attachment 4. Although two Heritage tree removals are needed at San Veron Park, the San Veron Park trees are smaller in size and number relative to the West Middlefield Road median trees.

Table 2: Trees in the Median at West Middlefield Road and North Shoreline Boulevard

No.	Tree Diameter at 54" Above Grade	Height	Heritage Tree	Tree Type
1	34"	85'	Yes	Redwood
2	28"	80'	Yes	Redwood
3	25"	75'	Yes	Redwood



Figure 5: Median trees on West Middlefield Road at North Shoreline Boulevard

Summary

The GRS upgrade is a critical PG&E safety improvement and staff has been coordinating with PG&E staff to identify a location that balances PG&E safety needs with the City’s interest to minimize tree removals. While PG&E has been cooperative and communicating with staff to determine the best location of the GRS, and without a City

determination that the San Veron Park location is acceptable, PG&E could proceed with upgrading the GRS at its current location in the median and removing the median trees without City approval. In accordance with Section 32.27 of the City's Heritage Tree Ordinance, PG&E is not required to apply for permits for removal of Heritage trees within the public right-of-way.

Staff recommends the San Veron Park location for the installation of PG&E's GRS and mitigation of two Heritage trees at a 2:1 ratio with 24" box trees and three non-Heritage trees at a 1:1 ratio with 24" box trees. Native trees will be considered, if feasible, based on final layout of tree locations. PG&E would be responsible for the tree removals and installation of trees to meet the mitigation recommendation. This would be in lieu of paying a fee for the tree removals.

FISCAL IMPACT

The design, construction, and maintenance of the GRS, including mitigation replacement for tree removals, will be funded by PG&E.

PUBLIC NOTICING

In addition to agenda posting, staff posted notices on the Heritage trees proposed to be removed and provided information for attending the virtual meeting.

MB-EA/1/PWK
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- Attachments:
1. Proposed GRS Rendering
 2. Proposed Site Plan
 3. Photos of San Veron Park Tree Removals
 4. Photos of Existing Location Tree Removals