

5.21. Mandatory Findings of Significance

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 substantially 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, substantially 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(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.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Significance criteria established by CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G.

(a) Does the project have the potential to substantially 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, substantially 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?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. The proposed Project would be located in the central western area of the City of Goleta. This Project site is in a highly urbanized area. There is some existing vegetation at the site and minor clearing of vegetation and some of the existing trees would occur during site preparation.

As described in Section 5.4, Biological Resources, there are no listed special status plant species observed in the Project site, and none have a potential to be present. Additionally, there are no listed special status wildlife species observed within the Project site.

One species proposed for federal listing, monarch butterfly, and one species that is a candidate for listing, Crotch’s bumble bee, and one CDFW species of special concern, western red bat, do have a potential to be present. Impacts to special-status plant and wildlife species would be avoided with the implementation of Mitigation Measures (MMs) BIO-1, BIO-2, and BIO-3. Impacts to Crotch’s bumble bee would be avoided with the implementation of MM BIO-4. The Project is not expected to result in impacts on habitats that support sensitive species, although mitigation measures have been proposed to ensure impacts are avoided, including MM BIO-5. Implementation of MM BIO-6 would reduce or avoid any potential impacts to nesting birds.

Similarly, Section 5.5 (Cultural Resources) and Section 5.18 (Tribal Cultural Resources) show that the Project would have a less than significant impact to important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. The records search indicates that no prehistoric cultural resources have been previously identified in the Project site. However, as described in Section 5.5 (Cultural Resources) and Section 5.18 (Tribal Cultural Resources), the proposed Project could have an adverse effect on previously undiscovered cultural or tribal cultural resources, when ground disturbing activities are occurring. With implementation of mitigation measures MM C-1, MM C-2, and MM C-1 for unanticipated discoveries of archaeological and historical resources, human remains and/or paleontological resources, impacts would

be less than significant, and the Project would not eliminate important examples of major periods of California history or prehistory.

(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.)

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. CEQA defines a cumulative impact as an effect that is created as a result of the combination of the proposed Project together with other projects (past, present, or future) causing related impacts. Cumulative impacts of a Project need to be evaluated when the Project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable and, therefore, potentially significant.

Four currently under construction and two planned projects were identified within 0.25 miles of the Greenbark 30 BESS site. The projects were reviewed to identify whether the Project could contribute to cumulatively significant impacts when evaluated in combination with these projects. The projects were identified from the Planning Department’s current projects’ list. These are considered potential cumulative projects whose impacts could combine with those of the Greenbark 30 BESS Project. They are:

- Ellwood Butterfly Habitat Management Plan Implementation – implement management program to restore Monarch aggregation sites, enhance biodiversity, and maintain public access, and other management plan activities
- Ellwood Tree Safety Emergency Permit and Ellwood North Restoration – emergency tree removal for safety reasons by habitat enhancements in monarch butterfly aggregation sites
- Beach Hazards Removal – removal of remnant oil and gas infrastructure hazards along City coastline
- PRC 421 Piers – plug and abandon 2 existing oil wells, remove piers, infrastructure, and access roadway
- Ellwood Mesa Coastal Trails and Habitat Restoration Project – improve 7.1 miles of trails, improve 3 drainage crossings, improve 2 beach access points, and 13 acres of habitat restoration
- Mini Storage – demolition of an existing park-and-ride facility (494 spaces) and development of new self-storage facility on an approximate 5.39-acre lot

As discussed in preceding Sections 5.1 through 5.21 any potential impacts of the proposed Project would occur during construction, with few, if any, operational effects. Because the construction-related impacts of the Project would be temporary and localized, they would have the potential to combine with similar impacts of other projects only if they occur at the same time and in close proximity. The cumulative temporary and localized impacts of the construction of the Greenbark 30 BESS Project are considered by issue area below. While actual construction periods often vary from those initially anticipated, it is possible that some of the six identified projects could overlap with the anticipated 2026-2027 beginning of construction at the Greenbark 30 BESS site. Additionally, applications for other unknown projects may occur and may overlap with the Greenbark 30 BESS construction period. Because the area is built out, any projects would be reconstruction or construction of replacement land uses on already occupied sites. Given the built-out nature of the Project vicinity and the capacity of existing thoroughfares, there would be no long-term impacts from the proposed Project that would have the potential to combine with impacts from the Projects listed.

Aesthetics. As described in Section 5.1, views to and from the Project site are limited by existing buildings and vegetation. The viewshed of the proposed Project is an urban setting and continued urbanization is the likely trend for the foreseeable future with little change in its overall visual character. The impacts from the construction of the Project would be minimal because the work would be temporary in nature. The proposed Project represents only a relatively minor incremental change in cumulative conditions

given the urban nature of the location. Therefore, the Project's visual effects are less than significant and are not considerable enough to represent a significant cumulative impact.

Agriculture and Forestry Resources. There is no agricultural activity at the site or any of the cumulative project sites. The Project would not contribute to cumulative impacts to agriculture and forestry resources.

Air Quality. Air emissions would occur during construction of the Greenbark 30 BESS. Emissions would include criteria air pollutants that could contribute to existing or projected violations of the ambient air quality standards for ozone and PM10. Other pollutants resulting from construction activities are accounted for in emissions inventories for regional air quality maintenance plans and would not impede attainment or maintenance of ambient air quality standards. Foundation excavation and other construction-related activities could potentially expose sensitive receptors to construction-related emissions, including emissions of fugitive dust and DPM, which could expose the receptors to increased health risk and hazards. These would occur only during construction and would be less than significant. Any potential adverse cumulative air quality impacts would be short-term (lasting for the duration of construction) and would not be cumulatively considerable; therefore, the cumulative impact would be less than significant. The operation and maintenance emissions (e.g., limited vehicle use) would be less than the emissions during construction activities and also less than the significance thresholds.

Concurrent construction of other projects in close proximity to the proposed Project would result in increased local air quality impacts for the duration of simultaneous construction activities. However, simultaneous construction projects would also need to comply with SBCAPCD rules and regulations regarding criteria pollutants. Any potential adverse cumulative air quality impacts would be short-term (lasting for the duration of construction) and would not be cumulatively considerable; therefore, the cumulative impact would be less than significant.

Biological Resources. There are no listed special status plant species observed in the Project site, and none have a potential to be present. Additionally, there are no listed special status wildlife species observed within the Project site. One species proposed for federal listing, monarch butterfly, and one species that is a candidate for listing, Crotch's bumble bee, and one CDFW species of special concern, western red bat, do have a potential to be present. Impacts to special-status plant and wildlife species would be avoided with the implementation of Mitigation Measures (MMs) BIO-1, BIO-2, and BIO-3. Impacts to Crotch's bumble bee would be avoided with the implementation of MM BIO-4.

There are two types of riparian habitat present within the proposed Project site, but neither are expected to be impacted. Impacts to riparian habitat and sensitive natural communities would be avoided with the implementation of MM BIO-5 by requiring avoidance and creation of a 50-foot buffer.

Within the proposed Project site, there are Wetlands and Waters of the State, as defined by the CCRWQCB. With implementation of MM BIO-6, impacts to State or federally protected wetlands would be avoided.

Although no bird nests were observed during the surveys conducted in support of the proposed Project, suitable nest sites are expected throughout the proposed Project site and adjacent open space, and many common bird species are expected to nest there. Implementation of MM BIO-7 would reduce or avoid any potential impacts to nesting birds. The proposed Project would not result in the removal of any protected trees.

The Project would not represent a significant contribution to cumulative impacts. Given the built-up nature of the City, other cumulative projects in the vicinity have limited biological resources. Impacts to biological resources during operation and maintenance of the BESS would be less than significant with implementation of mitigation, therefore, a less than significant contribution to cumulative impacts would occur.

Cultural Resources. There are no known historical or unique archaeological resources identified within the proposed Project site; however, previously unknown buried historical resources or human remains could be discovered and damaged, or destroyed, during ground disturbing work. Short-term construction activities and operation and maintenance activities would not significantly affect any unknown cultural or paleontological resources or human remains with the implementation of mitigation measures MM C-1 (Cultural Resources Awareness Training), MM C-2 (Inadvertent Discovery of Historical Resources, Unique Archaeological Resources or Tribal Cultural Resources), and MM C-3 (Treatment of Human Remains), as discussed in Section 5.5, Cultural Resources. No cultural resources would be affected during Project construction or during operation of the Project, and no contribution to cumulative impacts would occur.

Energy. The objectives of the proposed Project are to increase the reliability and flexibility of SVPs electrical grid and to help solve California's "duck curve" power production problem. The proposed Project would achieve these objectives by utilizing the BESS to store energy. Equipment used during construction would comply with mandated efficiency standards, and there would be no wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. The operation and maintenance activities would be minimal and would not involve wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption or use of energy resources. The energy being stored by the BESS would be delivered to the BESS from the mix of renewable and fossil fuel powered generation resources available at the time of charging. This energy would be discharged during periods of high demand, when fossil fuel resources are most likely to be called upon. As a result, the energy discharged by the BESS would be likely to displace the use of fossil fuel resources during periods of high demand. The proposed Project would not conflict with any state or local plan for prioritizing renewable energy or energy efficiency, and there would be no considerable contribution to a cumulative impact associated with energy.

Geology and Soils. As discussed in Section 5.7, the proposed Project The City is located would be located in a region prone to earthquakes and characterized by a moderate to high ground shaking hazard. Projects in the vicinity of the Greenbark 30 BESS Project would also be located in areas mapped as likely to experience strong ground shaking potentially combining to expose people or structures to potential significant cumulative impacts. All construction would be required to comply with building code standards that take into account effects of seismic events, which would ensure that Project design would reduce the potential for geologic and seismic hazards. The Project would not increase potential risks associated with seismic events or other geologic hazards. Short-term construction impacts to soils, including unstable soils, have the potential to occur; however, final geotechnical recommendations would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level and the proposed Project impacts are not considerable enough to represent a significant cumulative impact. Adherence to similar design and engineering standards, which are applicable to the identified cumulative projects, ensure that their cumulative impacts to geology and soils would also be less than significant.

There is a limited potential for paleontological resources to occur on the site. Mitigation measures MM C-1 (Cultural Resources Awareness Training) and MM C-2 (Inadvertent Discovery of Historical Resources, Unique Archaeological Resources or Tribal Cultural Resources) would ensure any potential impacts are less than significant and would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Because the direct environmental effect of GHG emissions is to influence global climate change, GHG emissions are by their nature inherently a cumulative concern with a cumulatively global scope. Project-specific GHG emissions would occur from the burning of fuels required by construction equipment and vehicles during construction activities. Primary GHG emissions during construction are associated with CO₂ from the combustion of gasoline and diesel fuel in equipment and vehicles. CH₄ and N₂O are also emitted from fuel combustion but at rates of less than 1 percent of the mass of CO₂ combustion emissions. Construction-related emissions would be distributed over 8 months.

These estimated levels would not exceed the threshold level of 10,000 MTCO₂e per year for annual mandatory reporting of GHGs.

GHG emissions from operation and maintenance would be minimal, as the Greenbark 30 BESS would require only infrequent maintenance. The minor quantity of GHG emissions created during construction and for operation and maintenance would not be a cumulatively considerable impact.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials. The use of hazardous materials for the Project would be minimal during construction and operation. Hazardous materials would be stored and used in compliance with applicable regulations. The Project would not result in an increase in usage of hazardous materials. Impacts from routine use, transportation, disposal, and accidental spillage of hazardous materials would be reduced to a less than significant level with implementation of mitigation measure MM HM-1 (Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response) discussed in Section 5.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials; no contribution to cumulative impacts would occur.

Hydrology and Water Quality. The Project site is covered primarily with impervious surfaces. The proposed Project would require minimal water for dust control and concrete during construction. Dewatering during foundation excavation for poles is possible, but not anticipated. In the event that dewatering is necessary, the water would be pumped out and treated and encountered groundwater would be tested to meet requirements set by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). Based on the hydrological analysis, a site-specific retention basin has been designed to capture excess stormwater runoff during long-term operations. Implementation of the condition of approval GEO2 (Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) Development and Implementation) and MM HM-1 (Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response) would ensure that erosion, sedimentation, or an accidental spill would not significantly affect water quality. With implementation of this mitigation, the Project's hydrology and water quality impacts are less than significant and are not considerable enough to represent a significant cumulative impact.

Land Use. The proposed Project, upon approval of the General Plan Amendment to reclassify the site as Office and Institutional (I-OI) and a rezone of the parcel from CG to Office and Institutional (OI), would be consistent with local zoning. The proposed Project would construct a compatible use within an existing site. In addition, the proposed Project, as well as the cumulative projects, are required to minimize any impacts to state and federally listed species and/or habitats through compliance with CEQA, the federal ESA, the CESA, and/or applicable local habitat conservation plans. The proposed Project would, therefore, not conflict with applicable land use policies and regulations and would not contribute to cumulative impacts to land use.

Mineral Resources. No commercial mineral resources are known to exist within the proposed Project site or vicinity. Therefore, the proposed Project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource. The Project would not contribute to potential cumulative impacts that may result in the loss of mineral resources.

Noise. The proposed Project is not expected to contribute to a long-term cumulative impact on ambient noise levels in the area. Noise from construction activities would be audible to nearby office buildings, schools, and residences but construction would be limited to daytime hours and would be short-term. There are several sensitive receptors located within a half mile of the site, including the adjacent elder care facility to the southeast, a residential community to the north beyond 101, a residential neighborhood to the west beyond the substation, and a school to the east beyond the Project-adjacent parking lot. It is assumed that the cumulative projects would also be constructed during daytime.

Construction of the proposed Project would result in temporary increases in ambient noise levels experienced by the nearby noise-sensitive receptors, with the closest being the elder care facility approximately 260 feet to the southeast, measured from the center of the proposed Project site, to the nearest property

line at the elder care facility. Although modeled levels are expected to remain below the applicable thresholds at the nearest sensitive receptor (see Table 5.13-5, Average Construction-Generated Noise Levels (dBA) Experienced at Nearest Residence), a planned project immediately adjacent to the site may be constructed during the same timeframe (mini storage facility adjacent to the Project's southern boundary). The potential for overlapping construction could result in cumulatively considerable increases in noise levels.

Without coordination or additional controls, the cumulative impact could be significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure MM NOI-CUM-1 would reduce potential cumulative construction noise impacts to a less-than-significant level:

MM NOI-CUM-1 Concurrent Construction Coordination Plan. Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, the Project Applicant shall coordinate with the adjacent project proponent(s) to identify overlapping construction periods. If concurrent activities are scheduled within 500 feet of a shared property line, the applicants shall develop a construction noise reduction plan in consultation with the City. The plan may include but is not limited to: staggered work schedules, use of quieter equipment, temporary sound barriers, and notification to nearby sensitive receptors.

Population and Housing. The proposed Project would not result in impacts on population and housing. During its construction, the Project would provide short-term jobs for a small workforce. Construction workers would be contracted workers from the region. These jobs are not anticipated to result in workers relocating to the area. The Project would not displace any existing housing or people. The proposed Project, combined with the cumulative projects will have the potential to increase the population in the area due to increased job or housing opportunities. The proposed Project itself can facilitate future planned growth by ensuring a reliable and flexible electricity grid in the area. While the development of these properties may induce some population growth, this has already been accounted for through the General Plan for the City of Goleta. The Greenbark 30 BESS Project is proposed to increase system reliability and to serve planned growth in the area. The project's population and housing impacts would be less than significant and are not considerable enough to represent a significant cumulative impact.

Public Services. The proposed Project would not interrupt fire or police protection services, schools, access to public parks, or other public facilities nor would it require the construction of new public service facilities. The completion of the Projects in the vicinity may have the potential to also increase the demand for public services and public facilities, including schools, parks, and fire and police protection. However, impacts from the Greenbark 30 BESS Project on public services would be incremental and would not contribute to a cumulatively significant impact.

Recreation. Although some workers may use nearby park facilities during Project construction; increased use would be minimal and temporary and would not contribute substantially to the physical deterioration of existing facilities. The cumulative projects also have the potential to increase use of park facilities, but the increased use would also be minimal. The Project would have less than significant effects on recreation and would not contribute to cumulative effects associated with other projects.

Transportation and Traffic. Construction of the proposed Project would have the potential for temporary impacts on traffic volumes, road hazards, and emergency access. Use of local roads for the transport of construction equipment and construction personnel would increase traffic slightly but would be temporary and short-term and would not exceed existing capacities. Impacts due to traffic and temporary lane closures as a result of the construction of the proposed Project would be reduced to a less than significant level with implementation of mitigation measure MM T 1 (Construction Traffic Control Plan) discussed in Section 5.17, Transportation and Traffic. Impacts from the proposed Project, combined with construction of the cumulative projects would have the potential to cumulatively impact transportation

and traffic in the surrounding area; however, the construction schedules of the Projects and that of the proposed Project would be variable. The potential for the planned and current projects in the vicinity to require lane closures simultaneously would be a remote possibility and would be limited in duration and location. Adherence to mitigation measure MM T 1 (Construction Traffic Control Plan) would ensure that the proposed Project's cumulative impacts to traffic and transportation would be incremental, short-term, and less than significant.

Tribal Cultural Resources. There are no known Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs) listed in, or are known to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) or local register of historical resources within the proposed Project site or surrounding area. However, it is possible that previously unidentified TCRs that may be eligible for inclusion in the CRHR or local registers could be discovered and damaged, or destroyed, during ground disturbance, which would constitute a significant impact absent mitigation. Implementation of mitigation measures MM C-1 through C-3 outlined in Section 5.5, Cultural Resources, and discussed in Section 5.18 (Tribal Cultural Resources), would ensure evaluation and protection of unanticipated TCR discoveries. Adherence to this mitigation measure would ensure that no tribal cultural resources would be affected during Project construction or during operation of the Project, and no contribution to cumulative impacts would occur.

Utilities and Service Systems. The construction of the proposed Project would temporarily require a minimal water supply and would potentially generate wastewater that would be appropriately treated. Construction would require the disposal of a less than significant amount of all types of waste. No expanded utility facilities or services would be needed for the Project and use and disposal of all water and waste products would comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Operation and maintenance of the Greenbark 30 BESS Project would not require extensive water consumption, as stated in Section 5.19. Therefore, a less than significant contribution to cumulative impacts to utilities and service systems would occur.

Wildfire. The construction, operation, and decommissioning of the proposed Project has the potential to conflict with an emergency response plan, or exacerbate wildfire risks in the event of an upset. The proposed Project would follow all rules and regulations set for BESS related to fire safety. The cumulative projects would not have construction traffic overlapping with the proposed Project, as construction schedules vary, reducing the risk for impeding an emergency response. With implementation of mitigation measures MM T-1 (Construction Traffic Control Plan) and MM HM-1 (Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response), a less than significant contribution to cumulative impacts would occur.

(c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. The proposed Project would not substantially adversely affect human beings directly or indirectly. The Initial Study identified no environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings. Adverse effects would be mitigated by implementation of mitigation measures and, in most instances, would be short-term construction impacts. Each type of impact with the potential to cause substantial adverse effects on human beings has been evaluated, and this Initial Study concludes that all of these potential impacts are either less than significant or can be mitigated to a less than significant level with the implementation of measures presented herein. (See Section 6, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, for a complete listing of the mitigation measures.) Therefore, the proposed Project does not involve any activities, either during construction or operation, which would cause significant adverse effects on human beings that cannot be readily mitigated to a less than significant level. The proposed operation and maintenance activities would be similar to current operation and maintenance practices for similar facilities, which have minimal impacts on human beings. The potential beneficial effects of the Project include improving the reliability and flexibility of the existing transmission system in the City of Goleta.

5.21.1.1. Impact Conclusions and Mitigation Measures

The proposed Project would not result in a significant contribution to cumulative impacts, other than one potentially significant impact to noise resources. However, with implementation of mitigation measure NOI-CUM-1 (Concurrent Construction Coordination Plan), impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level.