

Marin Emergency Radio Authority

Next Generation Radio Communication System

Addendum #1 to the Marin Emergency Radio Authority Next Generation Radio Communication System Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report

SCH No. 99092073

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February 2021

Pursuant to: California Environmental Quality Act, P.R.C. 21000 et seq.;
State of California Guidelines, California Administrative Code, 1500 et seq.

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA), serving as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA), certified a Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (“2019 SEIR” or “Final SEIR”) for the Marin Emergency Radio Authority Next Generation Radio Communication System (“approved project”) on December 11, 2019. The approved project is an upgrade to Marin County’s existing radio communications system that will improve the County’s emergency communications capabilities during daily public service and critical emergencies. Prior to the Final SEIR, the Final EIR for the existing “Gen 1” system was approved on February 24, 2000. As described in the Final SEIR, the approved project will replace equipment at currently operating communications sites and install telecommunications facilities at new sites where public and private infrastructure already exists. In total, ten existing sites will be upgraded, eight new sites will be introduced, and five existing sites will be decommissioned. The Final SEIR was based on preliminary engineering designs developed in conjunction with Motorola. This document is a 1st Addendum to the 2019 SEIR to address modifications to the power line trench at that was previously analyzed one of the sites, Tomales. The revised project proposes to share a trench that is being constructed by AT&T to support an AT&T cellular site nearby. This will eliminate the need for the MERA power trench as previously approved, and will add a shorter trench to connect the AT&T power trench to the MERA Tomales site (“modified project”).

The purpose of this Addendum is to evaluate potential environmental impacts associated with proposed changes in the previously approved project, specifically, the new power trench location and elimination of the approved power trench path. Additional CEQA review beyond this Addendum, in the form of a supplemental or subsequent EIR, would only be necessary if the proposed changes to the project created new significant impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of significant impacts identified in the Final SEIR used to approve the project.

According to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15162:

- (a) *When an EIR has been certified or a negative declaration adopted for a project, no subsequent EIR shall be prepared for that project unless the lead agency determines, on the basis of substantial evidence in the light of the whole record, one or more of the following:*
 - (1) *Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;*
 - (2) *Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or Negative Declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or*

- (3) *New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete or the Negative Declaration was adopted, shows any of the following:*
- (A) *The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR or negative declaration;*
 - (B) *Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR;*
 - (C) *Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible, and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or*
 - (D) *Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.*

Section 15164 provides the following guidance for preparation of an EIR addendum:

- (a) *The lead agency or responsible agency shall prepare an addendum to a previously certified EIR if some changes or additions are necessary but none of the conditions described in Section 15162 calling for preparation of a subsequent EIR have occurred.*
- (c) *An addendum need not be circulated for public review but can be included in or attached to the final EIR or adopted negative declaration.*
- (d) *The decision-making body shall consider the addendum with the final EIR or adopted negative declaration prior to making a decision on the project.*
- (e) *A brief explanation of the decision not to prepare a subsequent EIR pursuant to Section 15162 should be included in an addendum to an EIR, the lead agency's findings on the project, or elsewhere in the record. The explanation must be supported by substantial evidence.*

This Addendum has been prepared consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 and 15164 to document that the proposed project modifications would not result in new significant impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified significant impact; therefore, preparation of a supplemental or subsequent EIR is not required.

1.2 SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

This 1st Addendum to the 2019 SEIR demonstrates that the environmental analysis, impacts, and mitigation requirements identified in the 2019 SEIR remain substantively unchanged by the project modifications described herein, and supports the finding that the modified project does not raise any new issues and does not exceed the levels of impact significance identified in the 2019 SEIR. Accordingly, preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR is not necessary pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 and 15164. This decision is based on substantial evidence, as set forth in the following discussion of the proposed project modifications and the environmental impacts of those modifications.

This Addendum need not be circulated for public review (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15164(c)); however, an addendum is required to be considered by the decision-making body along with the previously certified 2019 Final SEIR prior to making a decision on the modified project (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15164(d)).

SECTION 2

PROJECT MODIFICATIONS

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA) is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) providing public safety voice radio communications for the 25 member agencies in Marin County, CA. The Next Gen Project, as approved, includes 18 communications sites, 17 of which are located in Marin County and one in Sonoma County. This SEIR Addendum #1 involves only one of those sites, the Tomales site. The Tomales site is located at Parks Ranch near Tomales, with access via a dirt driveway off of State Route 1, as more particularly described below and as shown in Figure III-13:

Site Number and Name	APN	Ground Elevation (ft)	Jurisdiction	Coordinates	Previous EIR	Comments
20. Tomales	100-050-42	487.0	Marin County	38.017000, -122.546000	No	New Site with cell tower and equipment.

The Tomales Site is a new site to which MERA facilities will be added, rather than an existing MERA site that is being upgraded. Construction at this site has not started.

The Tomales Site is situated approximately one mile north of the Town of Tomales on a small hilltop that currently contains a cellular facility. The surrounding agricultural land is characterized by grassy, rolling hills, fencing, and open space, as shown in Photo III-13 (SEIR Chapter III, Project Description). Development in the area is sparse, with occasional residences punctuating the otherwise open landscape. Much of the area is actively used for grazing, and the site is zoned Costal Agricultural Production Zone (C-APZ).

Details of the work for the Next Gen System at the Tomales Site are explained in Chapter III, Project Description, of the SEIR. In summary, project improvements include a new 75-foot monopole, small equipment shelter, emergency generator and fuel tank, and fencing as describe below in Table V-12. The site is accessed via an existing graded road that connects the cellular site with State Route 1.

MERA will lease the land for the radio site from the property owner and will use the existing graded road for access. After completion of the Next Gen project, an estimated 70% of the visible components at the hilltop site would be owned by MERA.

Table V–12. Tomales Site, Existing and Proposed Exterior Equipment

Site Name	Existing Infrastructure at Site	Physical Changes Analyzed in 2019 SEIR
Tomales	Existing cell tower and equipment shelter sited to minimize visual	Propose new 75' tall monopole, new shelter,

	impacts.	fence, generator, and fuel tank. 2 microwave dishes and 3 antennas added. 2 microwave dishes and 3 antennas added. New below-ground power cable from SE corner of site to follow same path as existing underground line.
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2.2 SUMMARY OF ORIGINAL APPROVED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The MERA radio system is vital for emergency countywide communications between police, firefighters and public works crews. The emergency communications system is a network of radio antennas and equipment linked with microwave connections. However, the combination of older equipment, system capacity, coverage and recent changes to frequency requirements by the *Congressional Jobs Bill HR 3630* now requires an upgrade of all Ultra High Frequency (T-band) radio communications systems, including the MERA system. The Next Gen System will update the current backbone network to utilize new radio frequencies in the 700MHz band to vacate the UHF (T-band) frequencies currently utilized. The Next Gen System will also utilize Project 25 (P25) technology to provide improved public service and emergency radio coverage within the County of Marin. Funding for the project is generated by a parcel tax that was authorized by Marin County voters in 2014. (WRA, 2019)

Since the 2019 SEIR was approved, the Congressional Jobs Bill HR 3630 requirement to leave the current UHF-T band frequencies was repealed in December 2020. This change has not resulted in any changes to the MERA Next Generation Radio Communication System project.

The current MERA system includes 15 active communications sites. The Next Gen System will retain and upgrade 10 of the functioning sites, decommission five existing sites and add equipment to eight new sites, which include previously developed infrastructure not part of the MERA system. Existing infrastructure at the eight new sites include communication facilities or water storage tanks, and a water wellhead site in northern Marin County.

Existing sites used in Next Gen System:

New sites in Next Gen System:

Civic Center
 Big Rock Ridge
 Mt. Tamalpais
 Mt. Barnabe
 Point Reyes Hill
 Dollar Hill
 San Pedro Ridge
 Mt. Tiburon
 Sonoma Mountain
 Stewart Point

Prime Site (Sheriff's dispatch center)
 Tomales (existing cell phone site)
 Coyote Peak (a water wellhead site)
 Skyview Terrace (an MMWD water tank site)
 Muir Beach (a local water tank site)
 Wolfback Ridge (an existing broadcast tower)
 OTA Mt. Burdell (an existing broadcast tower)
 Mill Valley Water Tank (MMWD water tank)

The five sites to be decommissioned as part of the Next Gen System are: Forbes Hill in San Rafael, Mt. Burdell near Novato, Mill Valley City Hall and Mill Valley Police Station, and the Bay Hill Road site in Sonoma County.

As described in the SEIR, the existing conditions at the Tomales site include an existing cell tower site, with two small towers and an equipment shelter. No MERA facilities have yet been constructed or installed. A photo of the site is provided below (*Photo III-13*). (*Figure III-13*). There are aboveground and belowground utilities along State Route 1, approximately 500 and 700 feet from the site, respectively (*Figure III-14*).

Elevations of the MERA Next Gen System equipment, as approved, are provided in Figure III-45; an overall site plan is provided in Figure III-46; and a detailed Tomales site plan is in Figure III-47. All elevation figures and site plans are included at the end of this section. As analyzed in the 2019 SEIR and as currently approved, the MERA Next Gen System includes the following improvements, with MERA ultimately controlling about 70% of the visible communications equipment at the site:

- New 75-foot-tall monopole mounted with one 3-foot-diameter and one 6-foot-diameter microwave dishes, and three vertical pole and five dipole antennas;
- New equipment shelter measuring 150 square feet in area and 10 feet high;
- New generator and fuel tank;
- New 6-foot-tall perimeter fence; and
- New belowground power cable from the southeast corner of the site to follow the same path as the existing underground line.



Photo III-13: Site 20 Tomales, near the trees, as seen from the private access road.

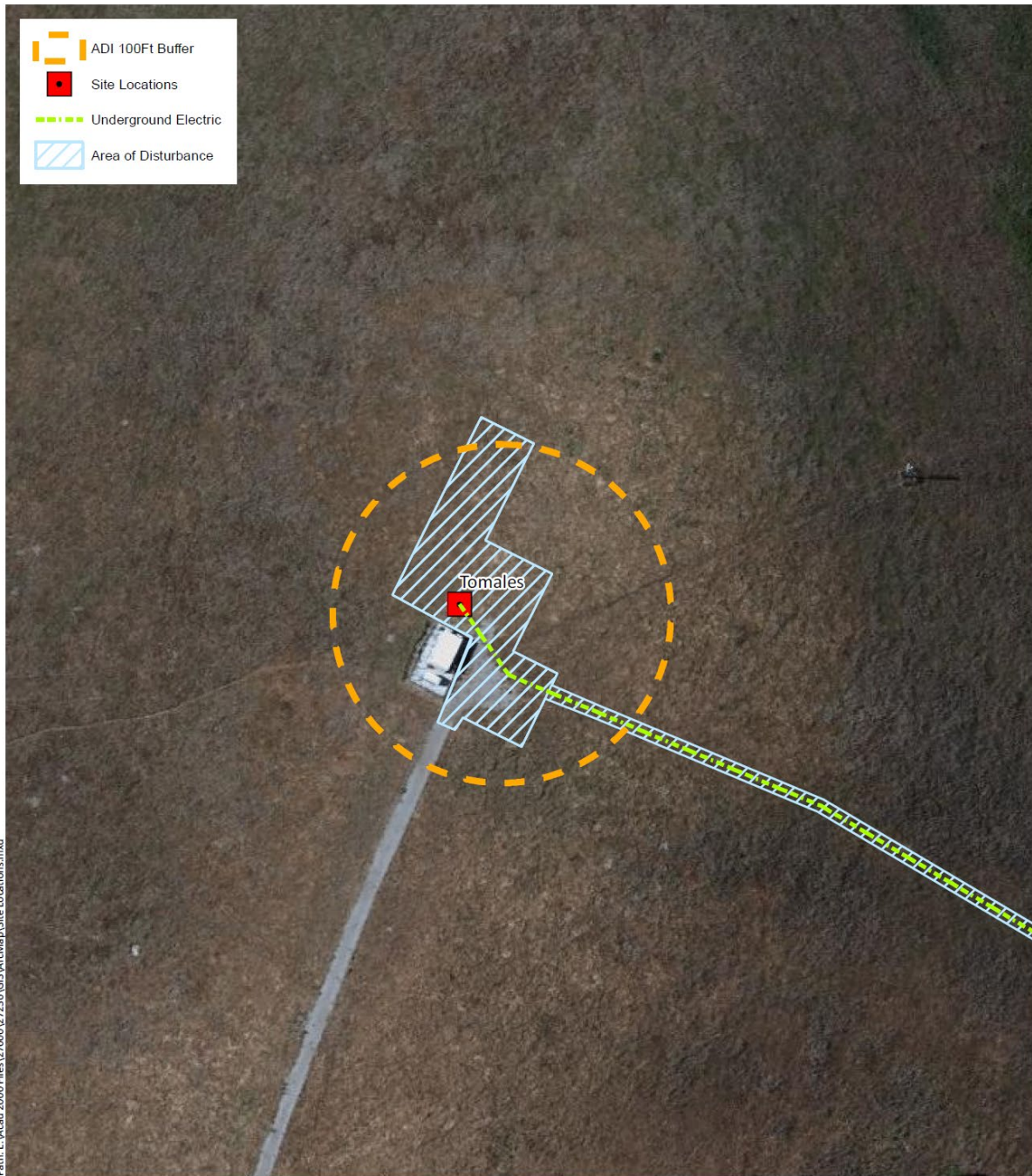
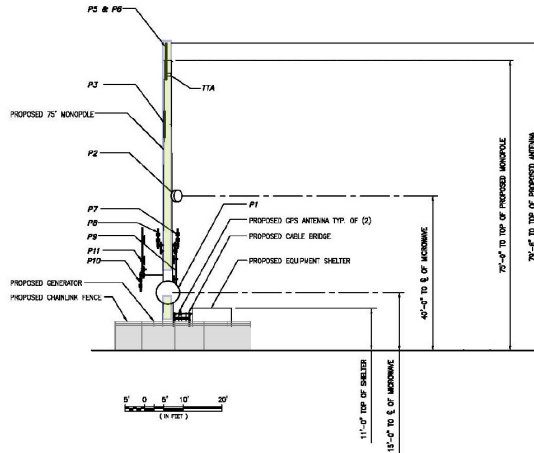


Figure III-13. Site 20 - Tomales Location Map



Existing Cellular Equipment Shelter at Tamales Site
Cell Tower is behind photographer. New monopole and equipment shelter would be to the right.
Source: WRA 2018



Proposed communications equipment on new 75-foot monopole.
Source: Motorola 2018

Figure III-45. Site 20 - Tamales Existing Equipment Photo and Proposed Elevation

MERA Next Gen Communications System SEIR

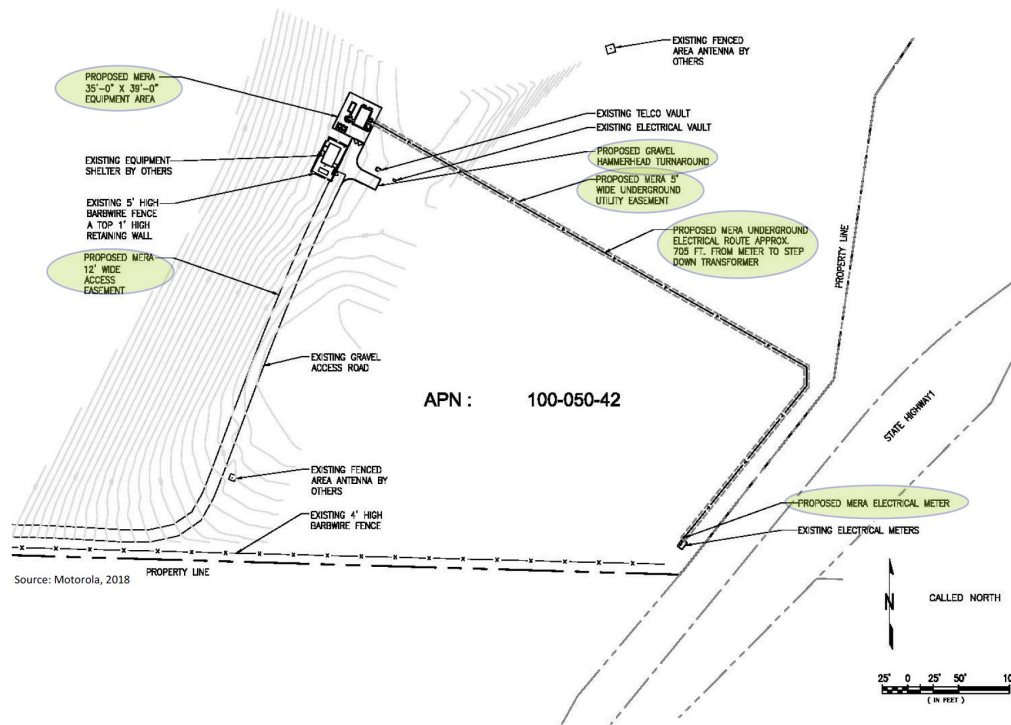


Figure III-46. Site 20 - Tamales Enlarged Site Plan

MERA Next Gen Communications System SEIR



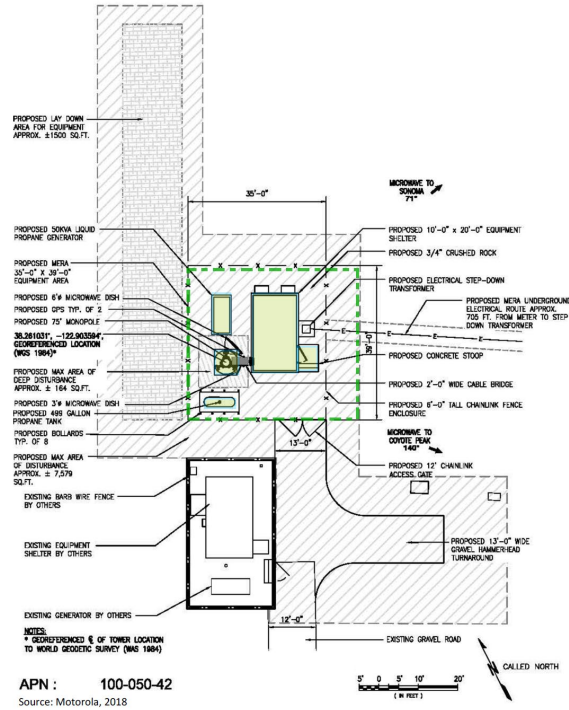


Figure III-47. Site 20 - Tomales Site Plan

NERA Next Gen Communications System SEIR



2.3 MODIFIED PROJECT

The modified project would eliminate the approved 705 ft power trench that was analyzed in the 2019 SEIR and is shown in Figure III-14, above. Instead, MERA proposes installing a new, approximately 50-foot power trench that will connect the MERA Tomales Site with an AT&T power trench, along a route not previously analyzed in the 2019 SEIR.

This new 50-foot power trench will begin under the approved turnaround area, immediately south of the MERA Tomales Site and continue north for approximately 50 feet to the MERA Tomales Site building. The entire length of this 50-foot trench will be under ground that has already been approved for disturbance. See Figure III-46 (Modified). The design, depth, width and materials will be consistent with the approved power trench that it replaces.

AT&T also plans to install conduit and pull boxes into their power trench, from the PG&E connection to a point near the MERA Tomales Site. (See Figure – Sheet E-2 on page 2-8). The AT&T power trench is part of a separate and unrelated project carried out by AT&T, and is not a part of the MERA Project.

2.4 MODIFICATIONS TO MITIGATION MEASURES

Based on the scope of the modified project and the analysis below, no modifications to the existing mitigation measures or new mitigation measures are recommended.

SECTION 3

IMPACT ANALYSIS

An Initial Study (IS) was prepared for the 2000 MERA Emergency Communications Radio System Environmental Impact Report. The Initial Study and the EIR determined that the project would not result in significant environmental impacts within the categories listed below. Therefore, the possible effects of the project in these areas were not analyzed in detail in the 2000 EIR.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Agricultural Resources | 8. Noise* |
| 2. Air Quality* | 9. Population and Housing |
| 3. Cultural Resources* | 10. Public Services |
| 4. Geological Problems* | 11. Recreation |
| 5. Water* | 12. Transportation and Circulation |
| 6. Land Use and Planning** | 13. Utilities and Service Systems |
| 7. Energy and Mineral Resources | |

* Five topics listed above required agency regulation measures in the IS to ensure impacts would be less than significant, including: Air Quality, Cultural Resources, Geological Problems, Water and Noise.

** MERA is exempt from local agency regulation and is only subject to state and federal regulatory provisions.

With the exception of Cultural Resources, the above impact areas were similarly not analyzed in detail in the 2019 SEIR. The 2019 SEIR specifically evaluated the Tomales Site for the following potential environmental impacts: Aesthetics, Cultural and Tribal Resources, Biological Resources, Land Use Consistency, and Radio Frequency Exposure. In addition, the SEIR evaluated the entire project for the following environmental impacts: Hazards and Hazardous Materials and Wildfire. References to tables, figures and photographs not included in this Addendum #1 are included in the 2019 SEIR (WRA 2019).

These potential impacts, and all other impact areas required to be evaluated under CEQA, have been re-evaluated in this 1st Addendum for the proposed changes to the Tomales Site Power Trench change. This evaluation determines whether the modified project would result in any new significant impacts or substantially more severe impacts than those identified in the 2019 SEIR.

3.1 AESTHETICS

Although the Tomales Site is new to the MERA radio system, the hilltop is already developed with a cellular communications facility. This existing facility consists of a 240 square foot equipment shelter and a 60-kilowatt diesel emergency generator inside of a fenced compound. The antennas for the facility are mounted on two separate monopole towers away from the main compound: one 18-foot high, 6-inch diameter monopole supporting two 4-foot long panel antennas is approximately 300 feet west of the shelter, and one 25-foot high, 6-inch diameter monopole supporting four 4-foot long panel antennas is approximately 300 feet southwest of the shelter. Each monopole is enclosed in 4-foot high cattle fencing. The monopoles are located a minimum of 400 feet west of State Route 1. The existing cellular equipment enclosure is visible from a distance but has limited near distance visibility, since the highway is approximately 300 feet below the peak of the rounded knoll.

Similarly, visibility of MERA's facilities will be limited at close distances but be visible from several distant points along State Route 1. MERA's equipment will include a new equipment shelter, emergency generator, fuel tank, 75-foot monopole, a perimeter fence, and underground power cables. The highest antenna on the proposed monopole would increase the maximum height to nearly 80 feet. Figures III-45 through III-47 in the SEIR show the proposed physical changes at the project site for the approved project.

The current modification involves removing the approximately 705-foot power trench depicted in blue in figure III-46 (Modified), and adding an approximately 50-foot power trench shown in red in that same figure. The new power trench in this modification lays entirely within the area of disturbance, beginning under the turnaround immediately south of the MERA fence and running north, under that fence to a connection at the MERA building. This entire length of the new trench will not be visible from the public roadways and once completed will be covered by the access road into the MERA site and the MERA site itself.

Key Observation Points (KOPs) have been selected to represent the full array of viewpoints from which the Tomales Site is visible. The SEIR includes simulated before and after conditions are portrayed for each KOP, and a map showing the site and the representative vantage points is provided as Figure V.L-1. Subsequent Figures V.L-2 through V.L-9 show the anticipated before and after conditions at the Tomales Site from the four selected KOPs.

Aesthetic resources in the vicinity of the Tomales Site include State Route 1 and the agricultural character of the surrounding landscape. Views from State Route 1 in this area are of the interior coast range, featuring verdant green or golden (depending on the season) grassy hillsides. From other surrounding roads, motorists enjoy scenic views of surrounding agriculture, open space and rolling hills. Occasionally there are broader vistas from elevated roadways overlooking the coastal valleys.

State Route 1 curves around the lower eastern edge of the Tomales Site, and the site's rounded knoll and existing eucalyptus trees prevent close-up views of the existing cellular facility from most of this segment of the highway, although the site is briefly visible to motorists traveling southbound. Other publicly accessible scenic views of the Tomales Site exist further to the north from State Route 1 and from Whittaker Bluff Road, approximately one mile away.

Impact determinations are made using the KOPs in conjunction with proximate protected scenic resources such as parks and scenic highways. As part of the determination, the following thresholds were considered:

a) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

A scenic vista is defined as an aesthetically pleasing overview of a broad landscape. Figures V.L-1 through V.L-9 depict the site's present visual character and simulated visual conditions upon project completion. The Tomales Site appears as a grassy knoll in an agricultural setting with a small structure visible from distant vantage points.

There are no designated scenic vistas in the area, although there is a brief vista from State Route 1, with an overview of the agricultural valley to the northeast looking towards Two Rock and Sonoma Mountain. This view would be unaffected by the modified project because it is behind the viewer and because the topography limits views toward the project from Two Rock Road. Upon project completion, the new 75-foot monopole would be visible from distant public vantage points, but none of these could be characterized as scenic vistas.

The modification of the power trench, as described above, will reduce visibility of the trenching work during construction and result in a trench that is not visible from the public roadways or scenic vistas and the aesthetic impacts of the entire site would be consistent with that depicted in V.L-1 through V.L-9. Consequently, **impacts on scenic vistas will be substantially the same or less than determined by the 2019 SEIR.**

b) Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

State Route 1 is not an officially designated state scenic highway, but it is eligible for designation. Accordingly, this analysis considers State Route 1 (Highway 1) as a scenic roadway due to its quality views of coastal California. Presently, views of the Tomales Site from Highway 1 include the grassy knoll with a backdrop of eucalyptus trees. Development within this viewscape is generally limited to ranch facilities and equipment, barbed wire cattle fencing, power lines, and the paved roadway. Upon project completion the 75-foot monopole would be visible from State Route 1, particularly to southbound motorists, where the monopole would briefly feature prominently behind the power lines that parallel the highway (Figures V.L-4 and V.L-5). To northbound motorists leaving the Town of Tomales, the very top of the monopole briefly appears above the ridgeline (Figures V.L-6 and V.L-7).

The project would not directly damage any scenic resources such as trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings at the Tomales Site. However, the brief view of the coastal agricultural setting as motorists drive south on State Route 1 is a scenic resource that would be altered by the project. Despite the implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-2 calling for screening and color blending design features, the addition of a 75-foot tall monopole and equipment shelter to the grassy knoll, and the visual impact on the landscape is **significant and unavoidable.**

However, as related to the modification of the power trench, as described above, the location and significantly shorter length of the new power trench will reduce visibility of the trenching work during construction and result in a trench that is not visible from the public roadways or scenic vistas; accordingly, the aesthetic impacts of the entire site would be consistent with that depicted in V.L-1 through V.L-9. Consequently, **impacts will be substantially the same or less than determined by the 2019 SEIR.**

Mitigation Measure AES-2

A six-foot tall, dark or earth-tone colored, opaque fence shall be incorporated into the perimeter fence on the north and west sides of the MERA facility to screen views of the equipment shelter from State Route 1 and from Whitaker Road. The fence shall also screen the same views of the existing cellular equipment structure, with permission from the owner/operator of that facility. Painted wood, permanently colored composite material (Trex or similar), or black vinyl chain-link with dark vinyl slats are material options suitable to screen views of the equipment structures.

MERA shall maintain the proposed galvanized grey color of the 75-foot monopole because it will result in minimal contrast with the sky on the hilltop location. Implementation of the described mitigation measures will lessen the visual impacts to a state scenic highway and other scenic roads in the area but the impacts would still remain **significant and unavoidable.**

c) Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

The visual character of the Tomales area is defined by rolling coastal hills and mostly undeveloped grazing land. The introduction of the 75-foot monopole tower, a prominent structure on top of the knoll (Figures V.L-2 and 3), in an otherwise minimally developed, non-urbanized area would adversely affect the agricultural setting and would substantially affect the visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings as viewed from publicly accessible areas, such as Whitaker Road and State Route 1. Therefore, the impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

However as related to the modification of the power trench, as described above, the location and significantly shorter length of the new power trench will reduce visibility of the trenching work during construction and result in a trench that is not visible from the public roadways or scenic vistas; accordingly, the aesthetic impacts of the entire site would be consistent with that depicted in V.L-1 through V.L-9. Consequently, **impacts will be substantially the same or less than determined by the 2019 SEIR.**

Mitigation Measure AES-3

Upon completion of tower and structure construction, MERA shall remove all debris from the site, define all vehicular access points and turnarounds, and complete finish grading including road surfacing where needed and soil preparation for planting. Vehicular areas shall be graded to drain and clay soils surfaced with gravel. Areas outside of vehicular zones shall be loosened or scarified if compacted, amended as needed and prepared to facilitate native seed germination. Hydroseed/mulch or hand-broadcast seeding and mulch shall complete site restoration. For sites steeper than 3:1 restored areas shall also include installation of straw waddles perpendicular to the slope at 20-foot intervals.

The equipment shelter, fuel tank, and emergency generator shall be painted dark earth tone colors to minimize contrast in the landscape and chain link fencing shall be black vinyl-coated.

Original Conclusion: With implementation of the described visual mitigation measures the impact would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

Conclusion based on the Modified Project: The modified project significantly reduces the length of the power trench that will be constructed by MERA, and moves it to a less observable location farther from public roads and immediately adjacent to the other communications facilities. Therefore, the aesthetic effects associated with the modified project would be substantially similar to the effects described in the 2019 SEIR. The modified project would not result in new significant impacts or substantially more severe significant impacts than were identified in the SEIR, and no additional mitigation is necessary.

3.2 CULTURAL AND TRIBAL RESOURCES

The 2019 SEIR considered the following thresholds with respect to the project's impacts on cultural and tribal resources.

a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

The Cultural Resources Inventory Report (GANDA, October 2018) commissioned for this project, which incorporated records searches and site visits, found no known historical resources pursuant to Section 15064.5 within or near the Tomales Site. Ground disturbance would reach depths of approximately five feet below ground level in order to install the foundation of the proposed monopole, the new fence, shelter foundation, fuel tank foundation, and the underground power line. The Area of Direct Impact and a surrounding 100-foot buffer are shown in Figures V.L-10 and V.L-11, and include the modified power trench location.

Despite the extensive nature of proposed disturbance at this location relative to other Next Gen Sites, accidental discovery of historical resources remains unlikely due to the soil types underlying the site. Nonetheless, work at the Tomales Site would comply with Mitigation Measure CULT-1 (please see page IV.B-10) and California law governing procedures for the accidental discovery of historical resources. By implementing Mitigation Measure CULT-1, the project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource in or near the Tomales Site, and impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. The impacts of the modified project will be substantially the same.

Tribal Cultural Resources

a,b) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in PRC Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is a resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1? In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Original Conclusion: Public agencies are required to consult with California Native American tribes that are on the Native American Heritage Commission's (NAHC) consultation list and are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of a proposed project that is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Consultation with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR) began on June 5, 2018, and concluded on February 8, 2019. FIGR identified a potential for adverse change to the significance of tribal cultural resources at 13 Next Gen Sites, and the Tomales Site was among these sites. However, by implementing Mitigation Measures TRIBE-1, TRIBE-2, and TRIBE-3 (please see page IV.B-12 and IV.B-13), the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, and impacts would be **less than significant** with mitigation incorporated.

Conclusion based on the Modified Project: As the modified project is a minor change that reduces the length of the power trench that will be constructed by MERA, the potential impacts to cultural and tribal resources will be substantially similar to the effects described in the 2019 SEIR. The modified project would not result in new significant impacts or substantially more severe significant impacts than were identified in the SEIR, and no additional mitigation is necessary.

3.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The 2019 SEIR considered the following thresholds with respect to the project's impacts on biological resources.

a) Would the project 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 CDFW or USFWS?

The Tomales Site is surrounded by heavily grazed, disturbed, non-native annual grassland, which provides limited habitat for special-status plant species. However, because of the close proximity (within 5 miles) of numerous documented special-status plant species, and due to the proposed ground disturbance work within previously undeveloped grassland habitat, focused, protocol-level special-status plant surveys were conducted within the site on March 30, May 9, and June 20, 2018.

The following special-status plant species were identified as having a moderate or high potential to be present within undeveloped non-native annual grassland portions of the site: bent-flowered fiddleneck (*Amsinckia lunaris*), fragrant fritillary (*Fritillaria liliacea*), congested-headed hayfield tarplant (*Hemizonia congesta* ssp. *congesta*), bristly leptosiphon (*Leptosiphon acicularis*), largeflowered leptosiphon (*Leptosiphon grandiflorus*), marsh *Microseris*, and two-fork clover (*Trifolium amoenum*). Several special-status plant species with potential to occur at the Tomales Site were observed at other locations, including: bent-flowered fiddleneck (observed March 30, 2018 along Highway 1, south of Tomales), fragrant fritillary (observed April 1, 2018 at Nicasio Reservoir), congested-headed hayfield tarplant (observed June 6, 2018 along Bodega Avenue in Petaluma), and bristly leptosiphon (observed April 8, 2018 at Taylor Mountain Regional Park in Santa Rosa). However, no special-status plant species were observed in the biological study area (the project site plus an approximate 100-foot radius), and the 2019 SEIR found that the approved project would have no impact on special-status plant species.

The following special-status wildlife species were assessed as having a moderate or high potential to be present at the Tomales site: American badger, burrowing owl, grasshopper sparrow, Bryant's savannah sparrow, northern harrier, and California red-legged frog. Burrowing owls inhabit open grassland with sparse or non-existent tree or shrub canopies. Burrowing owl individuals have been observed in the vicinity as recently as January 2018. Burrows and friable soils were observed during the site visit, including a potential badger burrow. The open grassland can also support nesting and foraging for grasshopper sparrow, white-tailed kite, northern harrier, and Bryant's savannah sparrow. California red-legged frog has been documented within one mile of the study area at Stemple Creek. California red-legged frog may be present in the study area after rain during dispersal events. Unmitigated, the 2019 SEIR found that the approved project could adversely affect candidate, sensitive, or special-status species at the Tomales Site, but by implementing Mitigation Measures BIO-2 (see Site 8, Point Reyes Hill) and BIO-3 through BIO-5 (below), impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels, and impacts to these species would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. As the modified power trench would be located within the project site that was previously analyzed, the impacts would be substantially the same.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3

No more than 14 days before the start of ground disturbance activities at the Tomales Site, a biologist shall conduct pre-construction surveys of the project site and a

surrounding 50-foot buffer to determine if American badger dens are present. If a den is determined to be active and occupied by a female with young, ground disturbance and construction activity shall be avoided within 50 feet of the den until the young have matured and dispersed. If a den is determined to be active, but a female with young are not present, burrow exclusion using passive measures such as one-way doors or equivalent shall be attempted for a minimum of three days to discourage their use prior to any project-related ground disturbance. If the biologist determines that the dens have become inactive as a result of the exclusion methods, the dens shall be excavated by hand to prevent them from being re-occupied during construction.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4

Work at the Tomales Site shall be avoided during night hours (half an hour before sunrise to half an hour before sunset) when California red-legged frog may be dispersing across the site. In addition, no ground disturbing work shall occur within 24 hours of rain events that generate greater than 0.25 inch of accumulated precipitation or during rain events predicted to accumulate 0.25 inch of precipitation.

Mitigation Measure BIO-5

A pre-construction burrowing owl survey shall be performed prior to start of ground disturbance activities at the Tomales Site, regardless of the time of year, as burrowing owls may use the project site during the non-nesting season. The survey shall be performed according to the standards set forth by the 2012 CDFW Staff report for Burrowing Owl Mitigation. Occupied burrows shall not be disturbed during the nesting season (February 1 through August 31) unless, after consultation with the CDFW, a qualified biologist verifies that either: (1) the birds have not begun egg-laying and incubation; or (2) that juveniles from the occupied burrows are foraging independently and capable of independent survival.

b-c) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the CDFW or USFWS; or have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA)?

The surrounding habitat consists of heavily grazed, disturbed, non-native annual grassland dominated by slim oat, soft chess, and common velvet grass (*Holcus lanatus*), with other predominantly non-native grass and forb species present including riggut brome, foxtail barley, milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*), hairy cats ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), and Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus* ssp. *pycnocephalus*). Non-native annual grassland is not considered a sensitive biological community. No sensitive biological communities are present, including federally protected wetlands. Accordingly, work on the modified project would have no impact on sensitive biological communities or federally protected wetlands.

d) Would the Project 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 site?

The Tomales Site is adjacent to an existing cellular communications site in an otherwise undeveloped portion of Marin County and is new to the MERA Radio System. Improvements included in the approved project include a new monopole, equipment shelter, fence, emergency

generator, fuel tank, and underground power line. Of these, the fence would have the most potential to interfere with wildlife movement. The proposed fence would be six feet tall, and the fenced compound would be 35 by 39 feet wide, enclosing a total area of 1,365 square feet. Outside of the fence, the area would remain as undeveloped, open grassland. As the proposed fence would be relatively short and is surrounded by otherwise undeveloped land, it would not present a substantial impediment to wildlife movement. The 2019 SEIR determined that the Project would not substantially interfere with the movement of native residence or migratory wildlife species or with established native resident or wildlife corridors or nursery sites; thus, impacts would be less than significant. As the modified power trench route will be underground, effects of the modified project will be substantially similar.

e) Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

The Tomales Site is located within the jurisdiction of Unit 1 of the Marin County Local Coastal Program (LCP), a state-wide program with local implementation at the county scale. LCP Unit 1 policies and regulations protecting biological resources potentially relevant to the Tomales Site include Policies Habitat Protection 23, 25, and 26. Policy 23 requires that disturbance to nesting and breeding wildlife be minimized, Policy 25 requires that impediments to wildlife movement be avoided, and Policy 26 requires that upland grassland feeding areas be protected against significant disruption of habitat values.

Mitigation Measures BIO-2, BIO-3, and BIO-5 require pre-construction surveys for breeding and nesting wildlife that may use the project site and buffers around disturbance areas should any active nests or burrows be identified. With implementation of these measures, the 2019 SEIR found that the project would not conflict with Policy 23. The fence at the Tomales Site will enclose a small area that is otherwise surrounded by open space, and is not sufficiently large to preclude wildlife movement and dispersal throughout the area. As such, the 2019 SEIR found that the approved project does not conflict with Policy 25. The non-native grassland present within the site is of limited habitat value and is predominately used for cattle grazing. The area of permanent vegetation removal would not be sufficiently large to degrade the quality of the adjacent grassland. Consequently, the 2019 SEIR found there to be no conflict with Policy 26. As the modified project involves a significantly shorter power trench in a location that is immediately adjacent to other communications facilities, impacts of the modified project will be reduced or substantially similar.

Original Conclusion: In conclusion, with incorporation of Mitigation Measures BIO-2, BIO-3, BIO-4, and BIO-5 to reduce impacts to breeding wildlife, there would be no conflict with the Marin County LCP's policies protecting biological resources, and impacts would be **less than significant** with mitigation incorporated.

Conclusion based on the Modified Project: As the modified project is a minor change that reduces the length of the power trench that will be constructed by MERA, the potential impacts to biological resources will be substantially similar to or less than the effects described in the 2019 SEIR. The modified project would not result in new significant impacts or substantially more severe significant impacts than were identified in the SEIR, and no additional mitigation is necessary.

3.4 LAND USE CONSISTENCY

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G asks three questions regarding land use. Questions a) and c) are addressed in Chapter IV.D (Land Use Consistency) of the 2019 SEIR, which looks at Land Use issues for the MERA Next Gen Project as a whole. As the modified project involves a minor change to the power trench at the Tomales Site, its impacts will be substantially the same as previously analyzed. Because the Tomales site is under state or federal jurisdiction, consistency with threshold b) of the Appendix G is separately analyzed below:

b) Would the project 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 environmental effect?

The Tomales Site is located within the jurisdiction of Unit II of the Marin County LCP. It is designated as C-AG- 1 (Agriculture Coastal Zone) and zoned C-APZ-60 (Agriculture Production Zone Coastal). Within LCP Unit II, an emergency radio facility is a permitted use in the C-APZ zone, subject to a Coastal Development Permit. The emergency radio facility also meets the definition of a 'Project' under the Coastal Zone regulations that also makes it subject to a Coastal Development Permit. The C-APZ zone is a master planning district, typically requiring the approval of a master plan evaluated against a set of agricultural-related criteria, but the Marin CDA Director can waive the master plan requirement. The County Development Code for the Coastal Zone in this area allows for a building height up to 25 feet and a tower height up to 150 feet on the property. The Development Code grants the Zoning Administrator the authority to approve a use permit and coastal permit for a public utility or service; however, MERA is not subject to this County-level permit and will be working with the County (as an agent of the State) to acquire a Coastal Development Permit. Furthermore, Section 22.57.0331(17) allows "Construction or alteration of gas, electric, water, communication or flood control facility unrelated to an agricultural use, as approved by the appropriate government agency". As a result, the emergency radio facility is a permitted use in the C-APZ-60 zone.

Section 22.70.0401 exempts towers from the zoning district height limit provided the tower does not cover more than 15% in area of the lot nor has a base greater than 1,600 square feet. The maximum tower height is limited to 150 feet. The approved emergency radio monopole has a base diameter of 32 inches and a height of 75 feet, well within the base and height limits of the exemption provisions. The 2019 SEIR therefore found that the approved project is consistent with the site's coastal zoning policies. The modified power trench will be underground, and will not implicate the tower height limit.

As discussed in Chapter IV.D (Land Use Consistency) of the 2019 SEIR, the Marin LCP Unit II Land Use Plan sets certain development and land use guidelines to minimize aesthetic, noise, and biological effects. In compliance with these design considerations, the approved project will cluster new improvements with existing communications infrastructure on site, construct underground utility lines (to reduce visual impacts and reduce exposure to possible wildfire), and include measures to avoid impacts to streams and riparian habitat. Implementation of biological resources Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-5 will protect habitat and sensitive flora and fauna. The approved project is therefore consistent with the site's coastal land use policies. The modified project will also comply with the Marin LCP Unit II Land Use Plan design considerations.

Under the approved project, the underground power line at the Tomales Site would be located partially within the State Route 1 right-of-way (ROW). Installation of an underground power line,

which starts within the ROW but leads away from the road and out of the ROW, would require an encroachment permit from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The modified project eliminates the need for MERA to construct a power trench within the Caltrans ROW; therefore, an encroachment permit would no longer be required.

Original Conclusion: Given that the project would be designed to comply with the requirements of the LCP Unit II and would not pose a disruption or hazard within the State Route 1 ROW there would be no conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purposes of avoiding or mitigating an environmental impact. Consequently, *less-than-significant* impacts would occur.

Conclusion based on the Modified Project: The modified project is a minor change that eliminates the need for MERA to construct a power trench in the Caltrans ROW, and has no other new impacts with respect to Land Use Consistency. The potential impacts will be substantially similar to or less than the effects described in the 2019 SEIR. The modified project would not result in new significant impacts or substantially more severe significant impacts than were identified in the SEIR, and no additional mitigation is necessary..

3.5 RADIO FREQUENCY EXPOSURE

The 2019 SEIR considered the following threshold with respect to potential radio frequency impacts.

MERA-adopted threshold (a): Would the project cause Radio Frequency exposure to exceed established FCC exposure limits for workers or the general public?

Evaluation of exposure limits for RF emissions at the Tomales Site (Site 20) is based on an analysis conducted by SiteSafe, LLC, an independent radio frequency (RF) and engineering consulting firm. SiteSafe's complete methodology and findings are detailed in Appendix D of the SEIR. Existing communications infrastructure at the site is minimal, so rather than measuring baseline RF emissions during a site visit, SiteSafe used an inventory and diagrams of proposed infrastructure at the site to model RF emissions levels relative to Maximum Permissible Exposure (MPE) limits from the proposed communications system improvements and determine the site's current compliance with applicable FCC RF regulations.

SiteSafe modeled these conditions for controlled areas (accessible only to workers meeting RF safety training criteria), but they used the general public MPE limit when calculating the percentage of exposure, which is five times more stringent than the limit set for workers in controlled areas.

At the Tomales Site, there would be 10 antennas capable of operating at one time (for a full inventory, see Page 227 of Appendix D of the SEIR). These antennas would cumulatively create a maximum rooftop exposure level in a controlled area of 196.8% of the public MPE limit. This controlled area is on a locked rooftop that is not accessible to the public due to its location and a 6-foot fence surrounding the site. It also is not typically accessed in the course of normal work, so worker exposure to this spot would be irregular.

Ground-level exposures, however, would be less than 5% of the public MPE limit, both inside and outside the security fence, due to the tower's height. SiteSafe's modeling of RF exposures in an elevation view can be viewed in Figure V.L-12, at the end of this section. The figure shows that

uncontrolled areas (accessible to the public) would experience a maximum (worst-case modeling scenario) of less than 5% of the MPE public limit. SiteSafe therefore concluded that all MERA facilities at the Tomales Site would comply with FCC regulations.

In summary, MERA's operations at the Tomales Site currently comply with the FCC's uncontrolled/general public RF exposure limits. The SiteSafe report found that the existing ground-level RF emissions were less than 5% of the MPE limits for uncontrolled/general public environments and would remain less than 5% of the MPE limits during each phase of the project. Likewise, the ground-level RF emissions within the fenced controlled/occupational environment are and will remain less than 5% of the MPE limit and therefore do not pose a danger to personnel in the area. As the project would not result in RF emissions in excess of the FCC's MPE limits, the 2019 SEIR found that impacts from RF emissions at the Tomales Site would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation was required. The modified project simply changes the location and length of the power trench, and will not affect RF emissions or exposure.

Original Conclusion: In summary, MERA's operations at the Tomales Site currently comply with the FCC's uncontrolled/general public RF exposure limits. The SiteSafe report found that the existing ground-level RF emissions were less than 5% of the MPE limits for uncontrolled/general public environments and would remain less than 5% of the MPE limits during each phase of the proposed project. Likewise, the ground-level RF emissions within the fenced controlled/occupational environment are and will remain less than 5% of the MPE limit and therefore do not pose a danger to personnel in the area. As the project would not result in RF emissions in excess of the FCC's MPE limits, the impacts from RF emissions at the Tomales Site would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

Conclusion based on the Modified Project: The modified project has no impact to Radio Frequency Exposure; accordingly, the potential impacts will be substantially similar to the effects described in the 2019 SEIR. The modified project would not result in new significant impacts or substantially more severe significant impacts than were identified in the SEIR, and no additional mitigation is necessary.

3.6 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The 2000 Final EIR found that there would be no impact or less than significant impacts for all thresholds related to Hazards and Hazardous Materials, with the exception of threshold b), which was found to be less than significant with mitigation (containment of hazardous and/or flammable fluids). The 2019 SEIR included additional analysis of current conditions at existing sites and sites new to the Next Gen system, and determined that all impacts excepting those related to thresholds b) and g) would continue to be **less than significant**. As the modified project involves a minor change to the power trench at the Tomales Site, impacts related to these thresholds will be substantially the same as previously analyzed.

Threshold b) is discussed for the project as a whole below, and threshold g) is revisited in Section 3.7, below, based on recent wildfire events and associated concerns.

b) Would the project 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?

As mentioned previously, the 2000 Final EIR found impacts related to threshold b) to be less than significant with mitigation. Specifically, the EIR stated: "the proposed telecommunication project

will contain elements having a potential risk of hazard associated with accidental explosives or release of hazardous substances such as the diesel and propane fuels necessary for emergency generator power". Diesel and propane fuels are both commonly used for the purpose of providing emergency generator power, and the potential for significant impacts is low when the two fuels are used properly and for their intended applications.

Workers who handle hazardous materials are required to adhere to health and safety requirements enforced by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA). State and local regulations together with industry standards and Best Management Practices (BMPs) have proven to be adequate for protection from risk of spills, and potential fire and explosion. The approved project will provide equipment and fuel storage designed to meet and comply with all applicable requirements (applicable BMPs are set forth in Chapter III). Based on the applicable regulatory requirements, the 2019 SEIR found that the potential for the approved project to 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 is **less than significant**. The modified power trench will not require any changes related to the use of diesel and propane fuels necessary for emergency generator power.

Original Conclusion: The proposed project will provide equipment and fuel storage designed to meet and comply with all applicable requirements (applicable BMPs are set forth in Chapter III). Based on the applicable regulatory requirements, the potential for the project to 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 is **less than significant**.

Conclusion based on the Modified Project: The modified project will not impact the project's need for diesel and propane fuels for emergency generator power; accordingly, the potential impacts will be substantially similar to the effects described in the 2019 SEIR. The modified project would not result in new significant impacts or substantially more severe significant impacts than were identified in the SEIR, and no additional mitigation is necessary.

3.7 WILDFIRE

The 2019 SEIR considered the following threshold with respect to potential wildfire impacts.

g) Would the project expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

As discussed in the 2019 SEIR, the recent frequency and intensity of wildfires in California's urban-wildland interface, especially in proximity to Marin County, called for revisiting this topic. Given the Next Gen System's critical importance for emergency communications during future wildfires in Marin County this topic is especially important.

The primary goal of the MERA Next Gen Project is to improve emergency communications and response in Marin County. A robust, reliable, and far-reaching communication system is integral to emergency response should a wildfire occur. This benefit, however, does not negate the possibility that MERA equipment and infrastructure could ignite, exacerbate, or expose people or structures to a wildfire.

People and structures associated with the project, as approved, would be exposed to increased risk of fire hazards under severe dry weather and wind conditions. In addition, construction operations could also increase the risk of igniting a wildland fire at project sites.

The 2019 SEIR concluded that the potential for the approved project to expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires is relatively low, due to the project's use of fully grounded electronic equipment, fire proof buildings and other construction techniques, steel towers, and underground utilities, and due to the absence of other development near the project sites. Further, the project utilizes sites that are in previously disturbed, well-cleared areas. With the use of standard safety BMPs (outlined in Chapter III of the SEIR) during construction and operations at all project sites, and with compliance to state law requirements in very high fire hazard severity zones, the potential to expose people or structures either directly or indirectly to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires is **less than significant**. As the modified project will comply with the BMPs identified in the SEIR, impacts will be substantially the same as previously analyzed.

Because portions of the approved project are located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified by CAL FIRE as very high fire hazard severity zones, the 2019 SEIR also addressed whether the project would have significant impacts based on the following thresholds:

a) Would the project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

The design and operation of the Next Gen System will benefit residents, businesses and industry in Marin County by improving the ability of law enforcement, fire protection and public works personnel to communicate with each other and coordinate with other agencies during an emergency. The approved project will result in better emergency radio coverage, thereby facilitating coordinated dispatch and response of emergency responders throughout Marin County. To maintain consistent reliability during broad emergency conditions, Next Gen structures currently are, or will be, constructed with fire-resistant materials, and electric service to new proposed sites would be installed underground. This would not change with implementation of the modified project. Emergency backup power at all unoccupied sites would be included as part of the project design to further insure uninterrupted operations, particularly during emergency situations, including wildfire. Therefore, as the improvement in radio communications resulting from the project would benefit the implementation of emergency response plans and emergency evacuation plans, the impacts of the project would be **beneficial**.

b) Would the project, due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

During certain parts of the year, the MERA sites are likely to experience severe dry weather and wind conditions that could result in increased risk of higher pollutant concentrations or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire. However, the MERA sites are unoccupied and, for the most part, are located in remote areas that are rarely visited by the general public. Technicians monitor the sites from afar, visiting monthly for safety inspections. As mentioned in the previous Wildfire threshold a), the structures at each site are or would be constructed with fire-resistant materials, the towers are made of metal, and electric service to new proposed sites would be installed underground. This would not change with implementation of the modified project. Therefore, due to the site locations, design, and ability to conduct remote monitoring, neither the proposed project

nor the modified project will exacerbate wildfire risks or expose project occupants to exacerbated wildfire risks, and the impact is **less than significant**.

c) Would the project require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

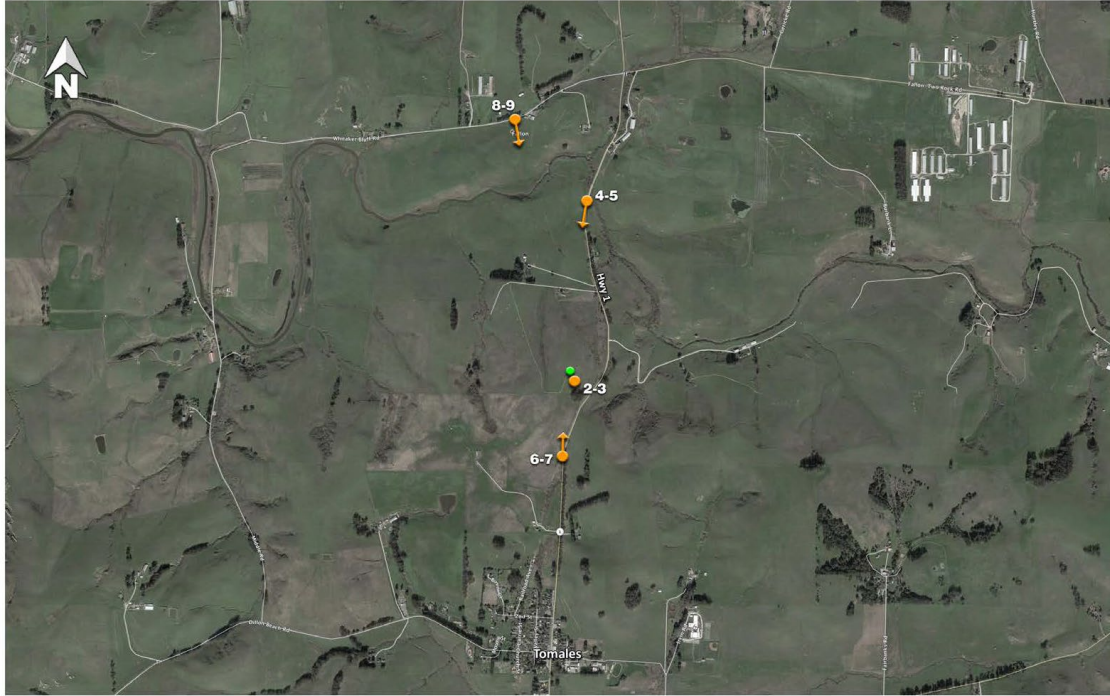
As discussed in the 2019 SEIR, new power lines required by the proposed project at the Tomales are to be installed underground, resulting in no increase in the potential for wildfire. The modified project involves relocating and shortening the proposed power trench, but maintains the power lines underground.

Emergency generators are required at all existing and proposed MERA sites and, like the existing MERA system, the approved project will utilize propane and diesel fuels to power those emergency generators. Routine delivery of fuels to on-site tanks occurs quarterly in order to maintain supplies adequate for emergency generator testing, although if generators are used then fuel requirements would increase. The 2019 SEIR found that there is a potential risk associated with this use of diesel and propane fuels. However, both of these fuels are common for use with generators, and MERA has a record of safely handling, storing, and using propane and diesel fuels for their intended purpose without incident.

As provided in the 2019 SEIR, MERA will require that workers who handle these materials in project construction and operations adhere to federal and State safety regulations (in accordance with OSHA and Cal/OSHA), along with the BMPs set forth in Chapter III. This will not change with implementation of the modified project.

Original Conclusion: Based on the safety history of MERA with the use of fuels, plus the applicable regulatory requirements, adherence to BMPs, and the ongoing monthly maintenance and monitoring site visits, the proposed project's potential to exacerbate fire risk or cause temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment due to the installation or maintenance of project infrastructure would be **less than significant**.

Conclusion based on the Modified Project: Like the approved project, the modified project involves installation of power lines underground; accordingly, the potential wildfire-related impacts will be substantially similar to the effects described in the 2019 SEIR. The modified project would not result in new significant impacts or substantially more severe significant impacts than were identified in the SEIR, and no additional mitigation is necessary.



Aerial photograph showing the viewpoints for the photosimulations.

Source: Previsualists Inc.

Figure V.L - 1 Tomales Aerial with Photo Locations

MERA Next Generation Communications System SEIR





Current photograph of the site as seen looking north from the hilltop, on private property. Not a public viewpoint.

Source: Previsualists Inc.

Figure V.L - 2 Existing Tomales Near View

MERA Next Generation Communications System SEIR



Photosimulation of the new MERA Next Gen 75-foot tall monopole and equipment structure on the site as seen looking north from the hilltop, on private property. Not a public viewpoint. Source: Previsualists Inc.

Figure V.L - 3 Proposed Tomales Near View

MERA Next Generation Communications System SEIR





Current photograph of the view looking south from southbound Hwy 1 approaching the site.

Source: Previsualists Inc.

Figure V.L - 4 Existing Tomales View from Highway 1 Looking South

MERA Next Generation Communications System SEIR



Photosimulation of the view with the 75-foot tall monopole looking south from southbound Hwy 1 approaching the site.

Source: Previsualists Inc.

Figure V.L - 5 Proposed Tomales View from Highway 1 Looking South

MERA Next Generation Communications System SEIR





Current photograph of the view looking north from northbound Hwy 1, approaching the site.

Source: Previsualists Inc.

Figure V.L - 6 Existing Tomales View from Highway 1 Looking North

MERA Next Generation Communications System SEIR



Photosimulation of the view looking north from northbound Hwy 1, approaching the site.

Source: Previsualists Inc.

Figure V.L - 7 Proposed Tomales View from Highway 1 Looking North

MERA Next Generation Communications System SEIR





Current photograph of the view looking south from Whittaker Bluff Road, approximately 5,000 feet to the site.

Source: Previsualists Inc.

Figure V.L - 8 Existing Tomales View from Whittaker Bluff Road.

MERA Next Generation Communications System SEIR



Photosimulation of the view with the proposed 75-foot tall monopole and equipment building looking south from Whittaker Bluff Road, approximately 5,000 feet to the site.

Source: Previsualists Inc.

Figure V.L - 9 Proposed Tomales View from Whittaker Bluff Road.

MERA Next Generation Communications System SEIR



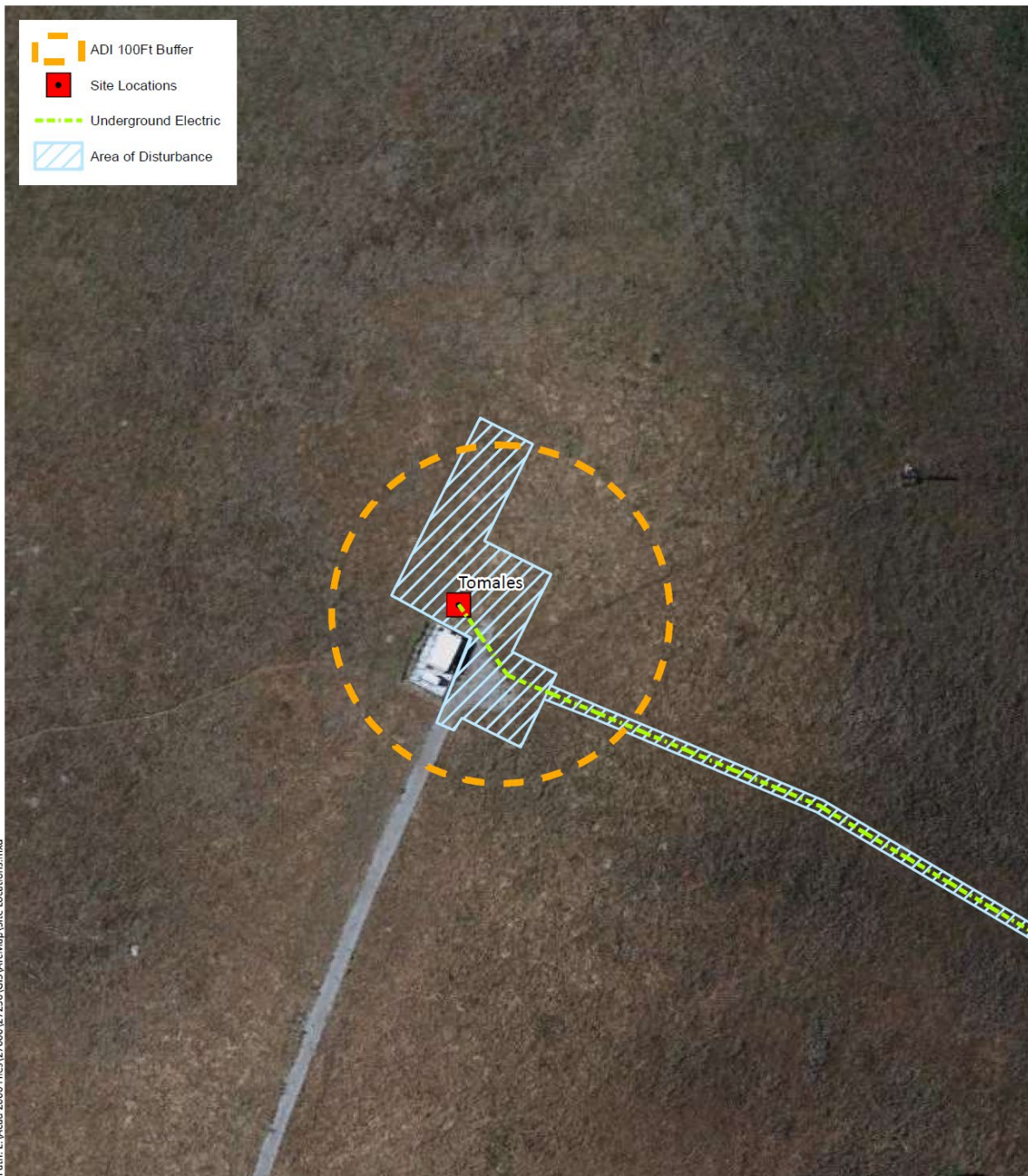
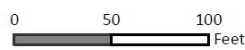


Figure V.L - 10 - Tomales

MERA Next Generation Communications System
Marin and Sonoma Counties, California



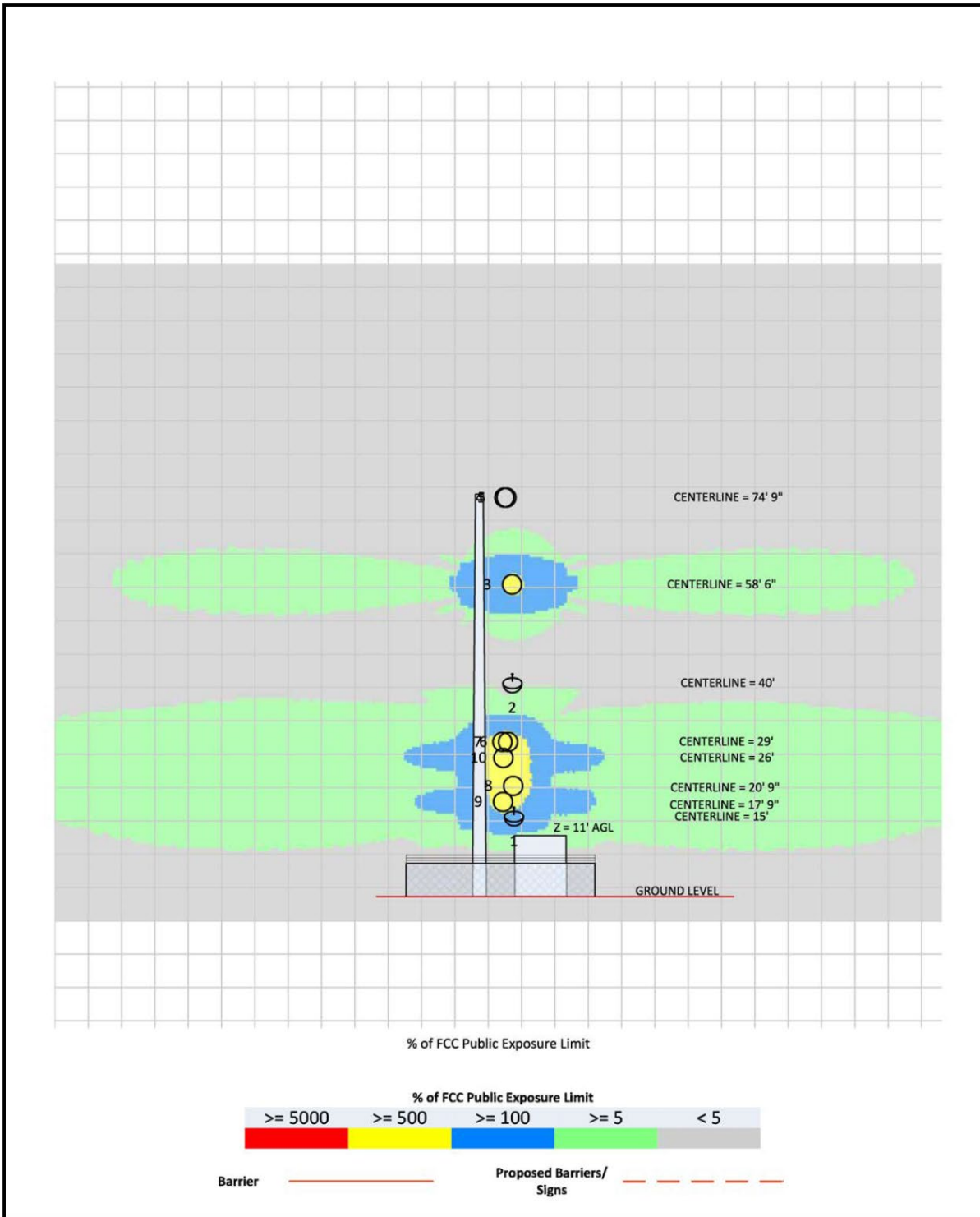


Figure V.L - 12 Tomales Simulated All-On RF Exposure - Elevation View



MERA Next Generation Communications System SEIR

SECTION 4 CONCLUSION

The proposed revisions to the Marin Emergency Radio Authority Next Gen Radio Communications System would modify the project's plans for the Tomales Site to remove a 705-foot long power trench and replace it with a 50-foot power trench, to be located in a less observable location adjacent to other communications facilities. The depth, width, and other design-related features for the power trench will otherwise remain the same.

An evaluation of all impact areas presented in Section 3 of this 1st Addendum indicates that the proposed modifications to the project would not result in new significant impacts not identified in the SEIR, nor result in a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant impacts, and no new mitigation measures would be necessary to reduce significant impacts beyond those previously identified in the 2019 SEIR.

In summary, the analysis concludes that none of the conditions described in Section 15162 of the State CEQA Guidelines calling for preparation of a subsequent EIR have occurred, and, thus, an Addendum to the 2019 SEIR is appropriate to satisfy CEQA requirements for the modified project. The evidence on file supports the finding that no circumstances or conditions requiring the preparation of a subsequent EIR are present in this case.

SECTION 5

REFERENCES

Marin Emergency Radio Authority 2019. *Marin Emergency Radio Authority Next Generation Radio Communications System Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report, SCH #99092073*. Prepared for Marin Emergency Radio Authority. November 2019.

WRA 2019. *Marin Emergency Radio Authority Next Generation Radio Communications System Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report, SCH #99092073*. Prepared for Marin Emergency Radio Authority. September 2019.