

By [Wes Bowers](#)

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## Outreach for upgrade project completed

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STOCKTON — Despite low turnout Wednesday and Thursday, Pacific Gas and Electric Co. representatives said the company's outreach for a new upgrade project has been successful.

The company held three open houses this week to gather feedback on its Northern San Joaquin Power Connect Project, which includes constructing new power transmission lines that would connect its Lockeford and Eight Mile Road substations with a Lodi Electric Utility substation.

The Lockeford and Eight Mile Road substations are about 16 miles apart, while the Lodi Electric substation is about 16 miles from Eight Mile Road and five miles from Lockeford, according to PG&E.

The project, expected to cost as much as \$105 million, will include construction of new 230 kV high-capacity transmission lines, providing what PG&E hopes will be increased reliability and efficiency for more than 50,000 residents in Stockton, Lodi, Lockeford, Acampo, Victor and Thornton.

Nicole Liebelt, a spokeswoman for PG&E, said about 20 residents attended the company's Tuesday night open house at the Lodi Public Library, and just a handful attended a Wednesday night open house at Tokay High School.

Thursday's open house was at Elkhorn Elementary School in Stockton.

Project development is currently in the first of three phases, which consists of holding outreach sessions and gathering feedback from residents to develop proposed corridors for the transmission lines.

A Lodi resident who wanted to be identified only as Garrett said his family and many in the agriculture community have long had concerns with building new transmission lines in unincorporated areas of north San Joaquin County.

He helped PG&E representatives on Thursday map out the areas where lines should not be built, particularly along Highway 12 just outside Lodi.

"As landowners in Lodi, we grow grapes and want to make sure no lines affect the Lodi Wine Trail or the farming community," he said.

However, Stockton resident Kim Deftereos suggested PG&E build the new lines along the path of the existing ones, or at least near the existing ones, to avoid the possibility of damaging private lands.

"The lines are already mapped out," he said. "It just makes more sense. It will save a lot of money. But (the project has) to be done. You've got to have this. It's not going to go away."

In 2012, the California Independent System Operator, which manages the state's electric grid, identified the need for new transmission lines in the area to connect the three substations.

Liebelt said PG&E will take residents' feedback to come up with five or six possible transmission corridors, then present them at more open houses during the project's second phase.

Ultimately, the project will be submitted to the California Public Utilities Commission, which will do its own analysis and choose the final transmission route, Liebelt said.

A formal application will be submitted to the CPUC in late 2017 or early 2018.

"We want to make sure this project has very little impact to property owners in the area," Liebelt said. "We've been working with the local community to help them understand the need and benefit for this project. Our main goal is to ensure we reach out early so the community can provide real-time feedback, which we really do value."

Residents can learn more about the project or submit feedback online at [pge.com/northernsanjoaquinpc](http://pge.com/northernsanjoaquinpc), or by calling (888) 743-1175. You can also email [northernsanjoaquinpc@pge.com](mailto:northernsanjoaquinpc@pge.com).

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