

DOCKETED

Docket Number:	19-SPPE-03
Project Title:	Sequoia Data Center
TN #:	229628
Document Title:	Request for Agency Participation in the Review of the Sequoia Data Center
Description:	N/A
Filer:	Marichka Haws
Organization:	California Energy Commission
Submitter Role:	Commission Staff
Submission Date:	8/30/2019 3:53:42 PM
Docketed Date:	8/30/2019

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

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TO: AGENCY DISTRIBUTION LIST

REQUEST FOR AGENCY PARTICIPATION IN THE REVIEW OF THE SEQUOIA DATA CENTER (19-SPPE-03)

On August 14, 2019, C1-Santa Clara, LLC (applicant) filed an application with the California Energy Commission (CEC) for a Small Power Plant Exemption (SPPE) for the Sequoia Backup Generating Facility (SBGF), which would provide backup generation support to the Sequoia Data Center (SDC) (collectively, "the project") (19-SPPE-03).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project would include a data center building, backup generators, and an electrical substation. The 15-acre project site is located at 2600 De La Cruz Boulevard in the City of Santa Clara. The SDC building would be four stories and would encompass approximately 702,114 square feet of gross area, of which approximately 70,000 square feet would be dedicated for administrative and office uses. The SBGF would consist of 54 diesel-fired generators arranged in a generation yard located on the west and south sides of the SDC. The SBGF would be used exclusively to provide backup generation to support the SDC during emergency loss of utility power. Total maximum building load would be 96.5 megawatts (MW). A 100-megavolt amps electrical substation would be located in the western portion of the site.

SMALL POWER PLANT EXEMPTION PROCESS

CEC has the exclusive authority to certify all thermal power plants (50 MW and greater) and related facilities proposed for construction in California. The SPPE process allows applicants with facilities between 50 and 100 MW to obtain an exemption from CEC's jurisdiction and proceed with local approval rather than requiring CEC certification. CEC can grant an exemption if it finds that the proposed facility would not create a substantial adverse impact on the environment or energy resources. In this case, the SBGF is subject to CEC's licensing authority unless the exemption is granted. Should the exemption be granted, the applicant would still need to secure the appropriate licenses and permits from relevant local, state, and federal agencies.

STAFF EVALUATION OF THE SPPE APPLICATION AND FURTHER STEPS

Public Resources Code section 25519(c) designates CEC as the lead agency, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), for all projects seeking an SPPE. CEQA requires the lead agency to consider the whole of the action; therefore, CEC will include the entire data center project in its analysis, which includes the construction and operation of the data center building, backup generators, and any associated utility connection facilities.

As lead agency, CEC is required by Public Resources Code section 21080.3 and CEQA Guidelines section 15063(g) to consult with responsible agencies regarding significant environmental effects that could result from the project. CEC staff (staff) has begun its review of the application and will request the appointment of a Committee of two Commissioners at CEC's September 11, 2019 Business Meeting to oversee the SPPE proceeding. Over the coming months, staff will evaluate the project and prepare an environmental analysis document—for SPPE projects this typically takes the form of an Initial Study. The Initial Study will be published and made available for a 30-day public comment period, and will also be circulated through the State Clearinghouse for review by state agencies. The assigned Committee will then conduct a hearing to determine whether the proposed project should be exempt from CEC's power plant certification process. This hearing will provide the public as well as local, state and federal agencies and California Native American tribes the opportunity to provide input on the exemption request. Subsequent steps include issuance of a proposed

decision by the Committee, and possible adoption of that decision by CEC at a Business Meeting or hearing. CEC's regulations setting forth the SPPE process are primarily located in Title 20, California Code of Regulations sections 1934-1947.

PROJECT WEBPAGE AND LISTSERVE

CEC maintains a website for this project at: <https://ww2.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/sequoia/>. The SPPE application and related project documents are viewable by clicking the "Documents for this Proceeding (Docket Log)" link located near the upper right corner of the project webpage. The direct link to the project docket is: <https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=19-SPPE-03>.

To receive electronic notices of all project-related activities and documents related to the exemption evaluation, go to CEC's listserv web page (https://ww2.energy.ca.gov/listservers/index_cms.html), and check the "sequoia" box under "PROJECTS UNDER REVIEW."

AGENCY PARTICIPATION

Your agency's participation is encouraged and would consist of identifying and working to resolve issues of concern to your agency in connection with the SPPE proceeding. Pursuant to Title 20, California Code of Regulations, section 1936(d), we request any "analyses, comments, and recommendations" on the exemption application which you wish to provide. Again, please note that should the exemption be granted, the applicant would then be responsible for obtaining all necessary local, state, and federal permits required to construct and operate the project, which may entail additional analysis by relevant permitting authorities.

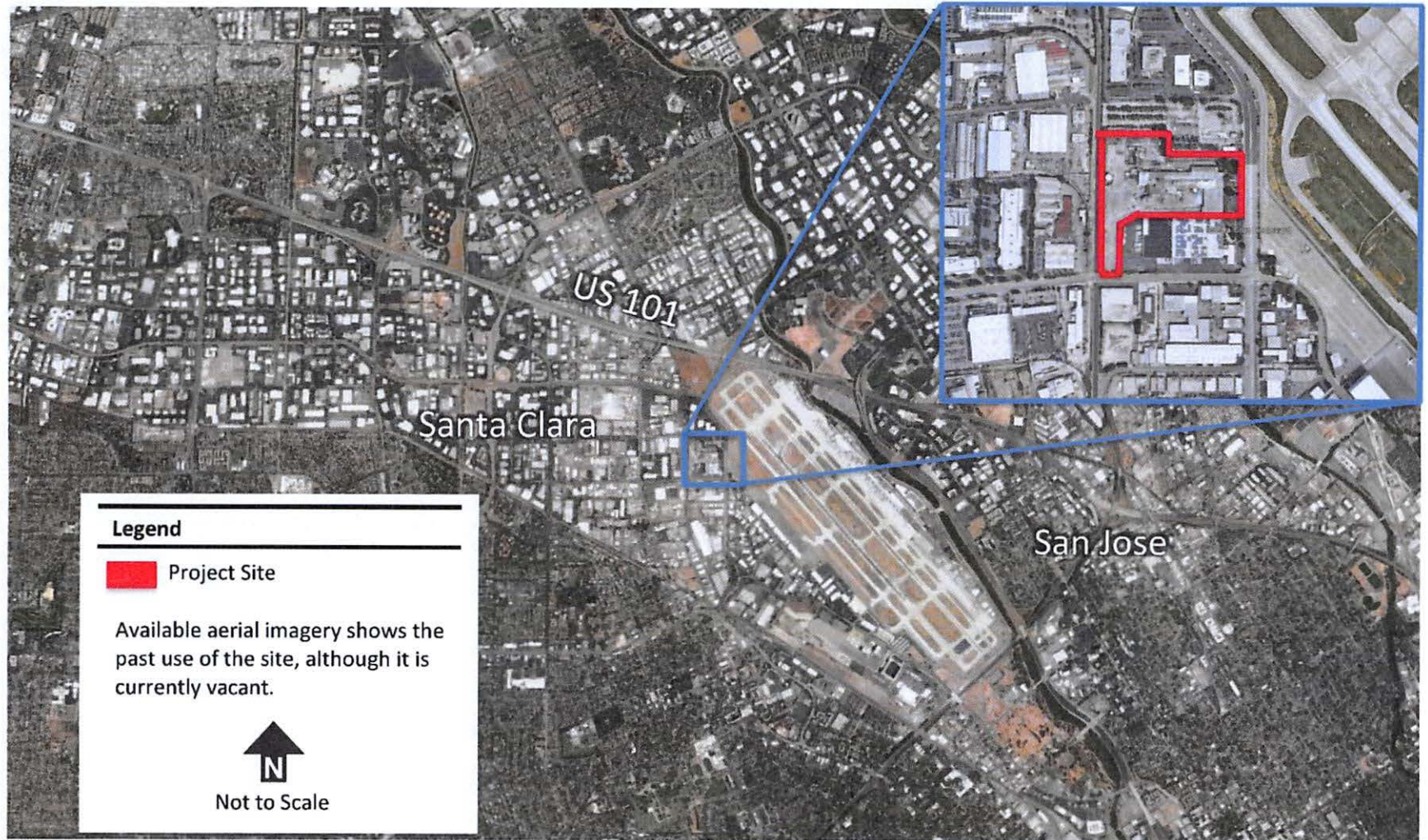
You may provide comments at any time, however, pursuant to Title 20, California Code of Regulations, section 1936(d), any written comments your agency may have must be filed with CEC prior to the conclusion of the hearing, unless otherwise specified by law or by order of the presiding committee member. The date of this hearing is not yet known, but pursuant to Title 20, California Code of Regulations, section 1944(b) it should be held no later than November 20, 2019 unless otherwise directed by the presiding member. CEC will provide advance notice of the hearing via the listserv once it has been scheduled.

You may submit comments electronically. To use CEC's electronic commenting feature, go to CEC's webpage for this proceeding, cited above, click on the "Comment on this Proceeding" link, and follow the instructions in the online form. Be sure to include the project name in your comments. Once filed, you will receive an e-mail with a link to them and the comments will be part of the proceeding's public record.

If you have any questions or need additional information on how to participate in CEC's review of the proposed project, please contact Leonidas Payne, Project Manager, at (916) 651-0966, or by email to leonidas.payne@energy.ca.gov.

Attachments:

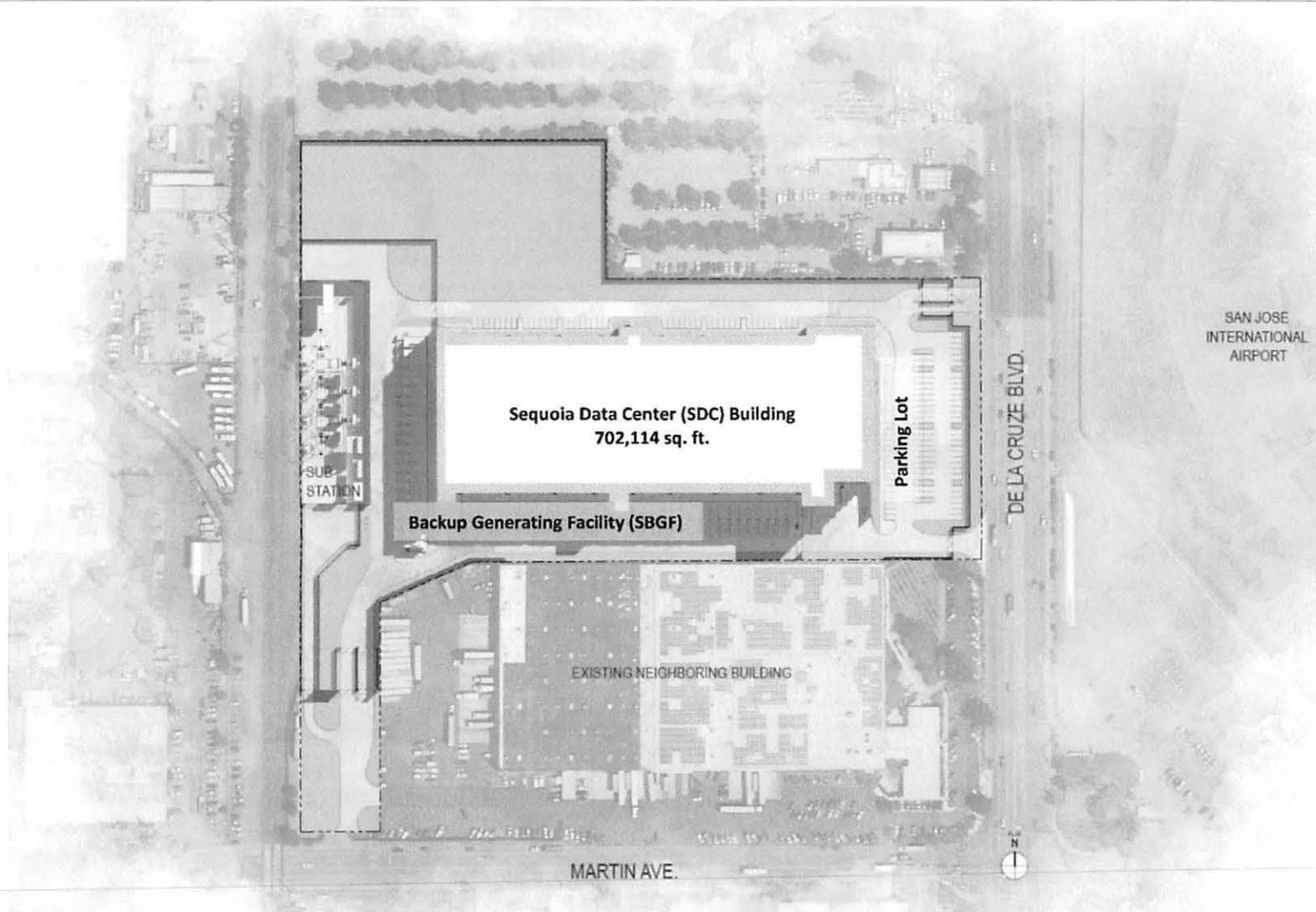
Project Location Figure from SPPE Application
Site Plan Figure from SPPE Application
Project Renderings from SPPE Application



Regional Location

Figure

Source: Google Earth, 2019



Not to Scale

Source: Corgan, 2019

Proposed Improvements

Figure

2



PERSPECTIVE – FROM EAST



ELEVATED PERSPECTIVE – FROM SOUTH-EAST

Exterior Renderings

Figure

5b

Source: Corgan, 2019