

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

Date: March 22, 2019

To: Responsible Agencies, Interested Parties, and Organizations

Subject: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Gregory Bateson Building Renovation Project, Sacramento, California

Lead Agency: State of California Department of General Services

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Comment Period: March 22, 2019 to April 22, 2019

PURPOSE OF NOTICE

The California Department of General Services (DGS) is the lead agency responsible for preparation of an environmental impact report (EIR) for the proposed Gregory Bateson Building Renovation Project (proposed project), located in downtown Sacramento.

Pursuant to provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), DGS has prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the proposed project. Once a decision is made to prepare an EIR, the lead agency must prepare a NOP to inform all responsible and trustee agencies that an EIR will be prepared (CEQA Guidelines Section 15082). The purpose of this NOP is to provide agencies, interested parties, and organizations with sufficient information describing the proposed project and the potential environmental effects to enable meaningful input related to the scope and content of information to be included in the EIR.

PROJECT LOCATION

The Gregory Bateson Building is located at 1600 Ninth Street in the City of Sacramento, California (Figure 1). The four-story building occupies a full square city block, bounded by Ninth Street, P Street, Eighth Street, and Q Street and is situated within downtown Sacramento near the California State Capitol. It is owned by the State of California, in the vicinity of many other state-owned buildings, and overlooks Roosevelt Park.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Designed in the 1970s and dedicated in 1981, the Gregory Bateson Building (building) was intended to be a flagship for new state office buildings, with an emphasis on energy conservation and improved amenities. In 2016, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) designated the building as a historically significant building due to its innovative design elements, which at the time were considered to be cutting edge for architectural design and energy efficiency. Since at least 2006, and probably much longer, the building's exterior has exhibited deterioration that appears to have contributed to extensive leaking. An infrastructure study, completed in 2008, identified a variety fire and life safety, building code, hazardous materials, and other infrastructure deficiencies. The building has received minimal repair and updating. As a result of the facility condition assessments completed in 2015, the Gregory Bateson Building has been ranked fourth in

Sacramento and fifth statewide, for state-owned, DGS-controlled office buildings requiring renovation or replacement.

The Gregory Bateson Building Renovation Project would address building-wide deficiencies, including: fire and life safety improvements; hazardous materials removal; repairs and water intrusion prevention detailing of exterior facades and their components; updates and repairs for disabled accessibility compliance; applicable reinstatement of energy systems and enhancements; addition of high-tech heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) and lighting controls; addition of security systems and procedures controlling movement within the building and between spaces; security officer station, physical barriers at west entrance; and improvement of interior spaces by replacement of finishes, etc. that are at the end of their useful life. The building is in need of a major renovation to ensure the safety and comfort of the tenants, and to avoid falling into an irreversible state of disrepair. Because of the building's historic designation, the proposed renovations would be designed to address the building's historic character, as well as correct the critical fire and life safety issues and other code deficiencies. The project goal is to achieve Zero Net Energy and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification.

The building contains approximately 215,000 net usable square feet, is included in the DGS Ten Year Sequencing Plan, and is necessary to fulfill office space needs in the Sacramento Region. However, the renovation of the building would not substantially modify the number of employees occupying the building. The current occupants, the Health and Human Services Agency, Department of Developmental Services, and Department of State Hospitals, would be relocated to the new 1215 O Street Office Building (currently under construction, shown on Figure 1) in March 2021. Proposed tenants for the renovated Gregory Bateson Building include California Natural Resources Agency departments from downtown leased space that are not consolidating into the New Natural Resources Agency Headquarters Building (also currently under construction, shown on Figure 1). The new tenants would move into the building in the Spring of 2024.

RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES

For the purposes of CEQA, the term "Responsible Agency" includes all public agencies other than the Lead Agency that have discretionary approval power over the project (CEQA Guidelines Section 15381). Discretionary approval power may include such actions as issuance of a permit, authorization, or easement needed to complete some aspect of the proposed project. It is anticipated that approval from various City of Sacramento departments will be required to complete the project. Where city approval may constitute a discretionary decision, such as potential approvals related to utility connections, it is expected that the City will use the EIR for the Gregory Bateson Building Renovation Project to support these decisions. Other agencies whose approval may be required for the project include, but may not be limited to: the State Historic Preservation Officer, Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, and Sacramento Municipal Utility District.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The EIR will describe the direct and indirect environmental impacts of construction and operation of the Gregory Bateson Building Renovation Project. It is anticipated that the EIR will address potential impacts associated with the proposed project in the following issue areas. In addition, the EIR will evaluate alternatives, growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative impacts.

Land Use

The Gregory Bateson Building is located in downtown Sacramento; renovations and subsequent operation of the existing building would not alter land use and would not develop any physical impediments that could physically divide the local community. Although the project site is located in the City of Sacramento, the site is owned by and under the jurisdiction of the State; therefore, the project is not subject to City land use plans or zoning. Nonetheless, in addition to evaluating consistency with the State's Capitol Area Plan, the EIR will discuss the project's consistency with relevant City of Sacramento planning policies.

Population, Employment, and Housing

The Gregory Bateson Building contains approximately 215,000 net usable square feet, is included in the DGS Ten Year Sequencing Plan, and is necessary to fulfill office space needs in the Sacramento Region. The project involves renovation of the building. Although it is not intended to increase office space, the renovation may result in some additional office space, which is not anticipated to exceed 10 percent. Therefore, the project is not anticipated to substantially affect local/regional population, employment, or housing opportunities but further information/analysis will be provided as part of the EIR.

Transportation and Circulation

The project may result in a minor incremental increase in the total amount of office space in downtown Sacramento, which could cause a commensurate increase in traffic on local roadways and demand for transit and other modes of travel. The EIR will evaluate the project's construction-period and operational AM and PM peak hour trip generation and how the project may affect delays and level of service (LOS) at key intersections. Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and access to the project site will also be assessed. The EIR will analyze project impacts on the roadway, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit systems.

Utilities and Infrastructure

As described above for population, employment, and housing, the project is not anticipated to result in a substantial change in the number of employees. Nonetheless, the EIR will evaluate project-related changes and potential impacts to infrastructure and capacity of water supply and treatment, sewer and wastewater treatment, drainage and stormwater, electricity, and natural gas. Wastewater treatment and disposal for the proposed project would be provided by the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District's (SRCSD's) Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant (SRWTP). Wastewater generated in the project area is conveyed to the SRWTP by the City's combined stormwater runoff and sanitary sewer system (CSS); the potential change in wastewater flows to the CSS and the SRWTP will be evaluated. The City of Sacramento is the water supplier for the project site; any project-related increase in water demand will be evaluated in the EIR to determine if there is sufficient water supply. Heating and cooling for the building would continue to be supplied by steam and chilled water delivered via underground pipeline from the State's Central Plant at 7th and P Streets. If the project requires any new or modified utility infrastructure, the environmental effects of that utility work, as well as the potential to interrupt service in the area, will be evaluated in the EIR.

Air Quality

The project site located within the Sacramento Valley Air Basin (SVAB), within the jurisdiction of the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD), which administers local, state, and federal air quality management programs for Sacramento County. Construction equipment would emit exhaust, including ozone precursors, particulate matter, and air toxics. Due to the size of the existing building (approximately 215,000 square feet), the planned energy efficiency, that the building is served by the State's Central Plant (for efficient heating and cooling), the availability of transit access, the urban location, and based on SMAQMD air quality screening criteria, the project is anticipated to comply with SMAQMD operational emissions levels; therefore, the preparation of an Air Quality Mitigation Plan is not anticipated. However, total regional operational emissions of criteria pollutants and precursors will be assessed based on project-specific information (i.e., traffic study, energy usage, building location) and compared to applicable SMAQMD significance thresholds for operational emissions.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change

As noted above with respect to air quality and although the project is proposed to be highly energy efficient and is served by the State's Central Plant, construction activities associated with renovations and subsequent operation of the project would result in the generation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Therefore, the EIR will quantify GHG emissions from construction and changes in operational (i.e., building energy, vehicle trips) activities.

Noise

Implementing the proposed project may result in short-term and long-term increases in ambient noise levels through renovation/construction activities. The EIR will include a description of the existing noise environment, including noise sources and sensitive receptors in the project area. The EIR will then assess potential short-term (i.e., construction) and long-term (i.e., operational) noise impacts to sensitive receptors. Operational noise changes may be generated by proposed stationary sources such as emergency backup generators, parking, and vehicle trips.

Geology and Soils

No known faults or Alquist-Priolo special studies zones are located in or adjacent to the City of Sacramento; therefore, the proposed project site would not be subject to fault rupture. The project design will be required to comply with applicable seismic and other building codes. Because the proposed project would renovate an existing building, would involve limited ground disturbance, would adhere to building codes, and because the seismic risk in Sacramento is low, significant impacts related to geologic and soils hazards are not anticipated.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Because the project site is currently developed with impervious surfaces (e.g., the building and sidewalks), the project would not result in a substantial increase in ground coverage such that interference with groundwater recharge would occur. Because the proposed project would renovate an existing building, would involve limited ground disturbance, and would connect to the City's stormwater system, significant impacts related to hydrology and water quality are not anticipated.

Hazardous Materials and Public Health

The evaluation will identify known hazardous materials or sources of potential hazards (e.g., asbestos, lead, wildfire hazard, etc.) at the project site. If present, hazardous materials could be released during building renovation. The proposed project would not involve activities such as industrial or manufacturing uses that could generate hazardous emissions. However, the office building would continue to use and storage of small quantities of hazardous materials, such as cleaning materials, commonly used at office and commercial locations. The routine transport, use, and disposal of such materials would be limited. Federal, state, and local laws regulate every aspect of hazardous materials transport, use, and storage. These regulations are designed to avoid significant hazards to the public and environment. The project site is not within a wildfire hazard zone or an urban-wildland interface, as the building is in downtown Sacramento. Nonetheless, this issue area will be analyzed further in the EIR.

Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources

The Gregory Bateson Building is designated as a historically significant building due to its innovative design elements, which at the time were considered to be cutting edge for architectural design and energy efficiency. The elements of the building that contribute to its historical significance will be described and the potential for the proposed project to impact the historic features of the building will be assessed. Consultation will be initiated with the State Historic Preservation Officer per Public Resources Code Section 5024/5024.5. In addition, outreach to the Native American community and local historical groups will be conducted to solicit information on tribal cultural resources and any known cultural resources concerns or issues. There is the potential for buried prehistoric and historic-era resources within the project area, as there is in much of downtown Sacramento. Due to the potential for limited ground disturbance (such as for utility connections), potential impacts to these resources during project construction will be considered in the EIR.

Biological Resources

Sensitive biological resources are those protected by federal, state, or local resource conservation agencies and organizations. The project site is developed and is not anticipated to support sensitive habitats or habitat for any special-status species. The EIR will disclose the common biological resources in the area,

including vegetation and wildlife and, if identified, the EIR will evaluate the project's potential to impact common and sensitive biological resources.

Public Services

The potential for an increase in office space and associated employees downtown will be considered in evaluating the project's potential impacts to fire protection services, law enforcement services, and parks and recreation facilities. Because the project does not propose removal or construction of housing, it is not anticipated to have an impact on schools. The Sacramento City Fire Department (SCFD) provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the project area, including State-owned office buildings. Police protection to the project site is provided by the California Highway Patrol (CHP) Office of Capitol Protection (OCP). The proposed project would be designed in compliance with all applicable building codes and fire protection regulations, and it is anticipated that existing police services would continue to be adequate to continue to serve the building. As the project involves an existing building that would be retained/renovated, potentially significant impacts to public services are not anticipated.

Aesthetics/Light and Glare

Because the project would primarily involve interior renovations to the Gregory Bateson Building and would not change to the building massing, height, or lighting, potentially significant impacts are not anticipated. However, because the project may involve some exterior modifications, including replacement of windows, etc., additional information/analysis will be provided as part of the EIR.

Cumulative Impacts

Implementation of the proposed project could potentially result in significant impacts; when taken together with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects, the project's contribution to the overall cumulative effect of all these activities could be considerable. Cumulative impacts and the project's contribution to those impacts will be evaluated in the EIR.

Alternatives

In accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR Section 15126.6), the EIR will describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project that are capable of meeting most of the project's objectives, and that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. The EIR will also identify any alternatives that were considered but rejected by the lead agency as infeasible and briefly explain the reasons why. The EIR will provide an analysis of the No-Project Alternative and will also identify the environmentally superior alternative.

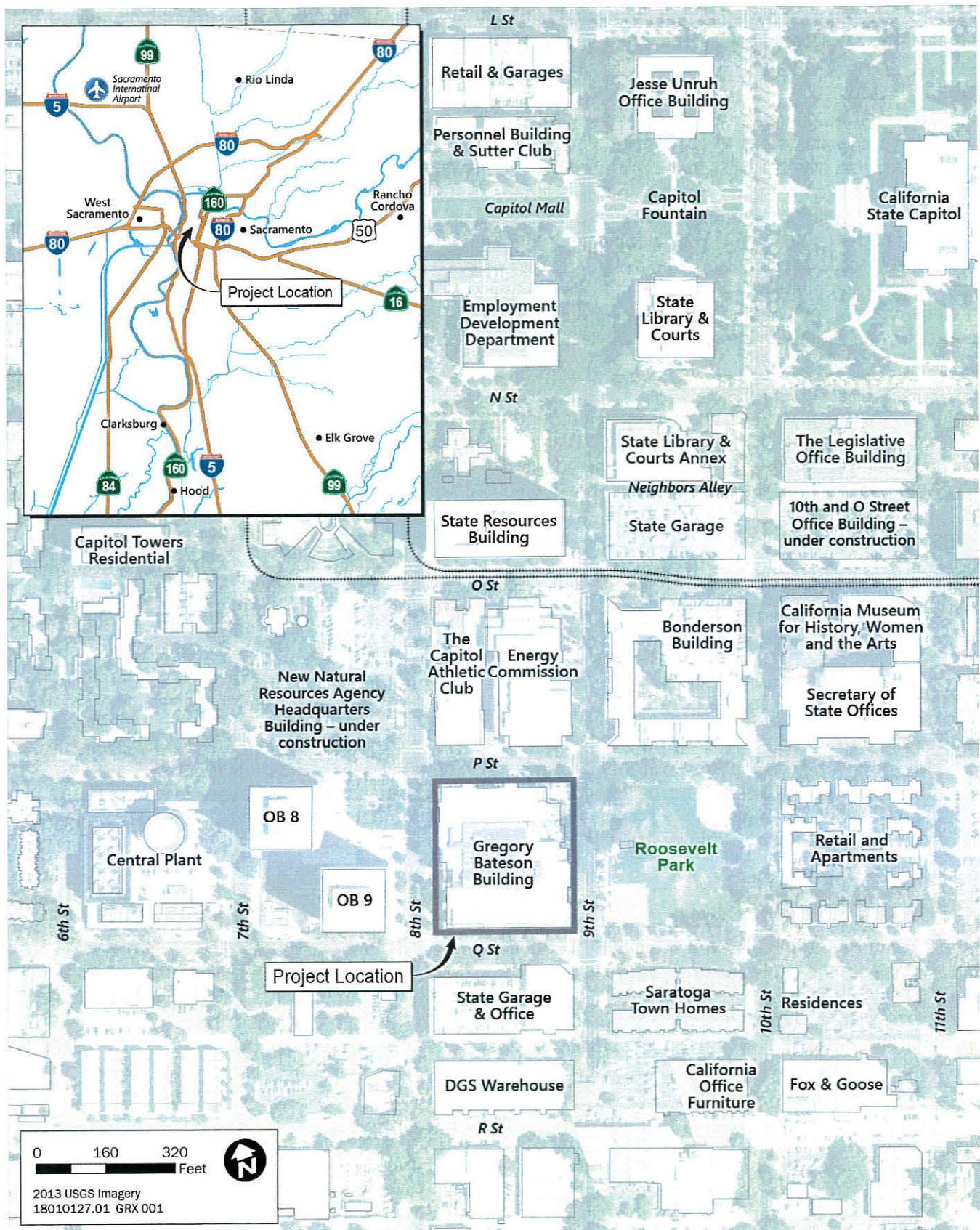
PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD

This Notice of Preparation is being circulated for public review and comment for a period of 31 days beginning March 22, 2019. An open house format scoping meeting will be held from 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM on Wednesday, April 10, 2019 at The Courtyard event center at 1322 O Street, Sacramento, 95814. Agencies and individuals may attend the scoping meeting at any time to obtain information on the project, ask questions of project team members, and provide comments. A brief presentation on the proposed project and the CEQA process will be given. Written comments will be accepted by DGS through 5:00 PM on April 22, 2019. Comments must be delivered or mailed to Ms. Jennifer Parson, at the address listed above.

Copies of the Notice of Preparation may be reviewed at the following locations:

- ▲ Sacramento Central Library at 828 I Street during library hours;
- ▲ Department of General Services, Environmental Services Section between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM; or
- ▲ Request a copy by email at environmental@dgs.ca.gov.

Your views and comments on how the project may affect the environment are welcomed. Please contact Ms. Jennifer Parson if you have any questions about the environmental review process for the Gregory Bateson Building Renovation Project.



Source: Sacramento County 2006. Adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2019.

Figure 1 Project Location