



NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Date: November 4, 2020

To: Agencies and Interested Parties

Lead Agency: Sacramento Municipal Utility District
6201 S Street, MS B203
Sacramento, CA 95817-1899
Contact: Rob Ferrera at (916) 732-6676

Subject: Station H Substation Project Environmental Impact Report

Review Period: November 4, 2020 to December 8, 2020

Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) proposes to decommission the existing Station A substation and remove all electrical-substation-related equipment from within the historic Old Folsom Powerhouse Sacramento Station A building (historic Station A building) and the outdoor substation yard. Following the removal of all Station A equipment, SMUD would construct a new electrical substation (Station H) in place of the outdoor substation along the north side of H Street between 6th Street and 7th Street in downtown Sacramento ("Station H Substation Project" or "project"). SMUD plans to prepare an environmental impact report (EIR) for the project to satisfy the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.) and will serve as the lead agency for CEQA compliance.

Purpose of Notice: In accordance with CEQA, SMUD is distributing a notice of preparation (NOP) to solicit comments on the scope of an EIR that is being prepared for the Station H Substation Project. SMUD is the lead agency responsible for the project and as such, is also responsible for complying with the provisions of CEQA.

The Station H Substation Project would provide electrical service reliability in the downtown Sacramento area. SMUD will prepare an EIR, as required by Public Resources Code Section 21080.09, to evaluate the environmental effects of the project.

This NOP has been prepared pursuant to Sections 15082 and 15083 of the CEQA Guidelines. This NOP starts a public scoping period that will assist in the preparation of the Draft EIR. The public scoping period is for 30 days and will run from November 4, 2020 to December 8, 2020. The purpose of the NOP is to provide sufficient information about the proposed project and its environmental impacts to allow agencies and the interested parties the opportunity to provide a meaningful response related to the scope and content of the

EIR, including possible environmental impacts, mitigation measures, and alternatives.

Project Location: The project site is located at the northeast corner of 6th Street and H Street in downtown Sacramento (see Figure 1). The project site is bordered by H Street to the south, 6th Street to the west, Government Alley to the north, and the Mercy Housing 7th & H Housing Community (Mercy Housing Community) to the east. The location for construction staging is not yet known but is assumed to be within five miles of the project site. As shown in Figure 2, much of the project site is currently occupied by Station A equipment and the historic Station A building, which is a California Historical Landmark. The project site totals approximately 0.47 acres.

The project is located in a highly developed area of downtown Sacramento. Sacramento County municipal buildings near the project site include the Sheriff's Department, Recorder's Office, Department of Technology, courthouse, jail, Administration Center, and two parking garages. The Mercy Housing 7th & H Housing Community is directly adjacent to the eastern edge of the project site. The Mercy Housing Community includes retail and clinic space on the ground floor with 150 residential units spread across seven stories. The Mercy Housing Community also includes two large landscaped terraces on the second floor. SMUD's Station G substation is currently under construction directly north of the project site across Government Alley and is within the boundary of the Railyards Specific Plan area. The privately-owned Hall of Justice Building is across the street to the south and the U.S. District Court is across the street to the southwest. The historic Rail Depot and Sacramento Intermodal Transportation Facility are located approximately 800 feet to the west.

Project Objectives: Objectives for the project include:

- provide safe and reliable electrical service to existing and proposed development in the downtown Sacramento area;
- meet SMUD's goals of ensuring electrical service reliability in the downtown Sacramento area by 2024;
- provide greater operational flexibility between circuits and substations in the area;
- maximize the use of available SMUD property and resources;
- minimize impacts to nearby sensitive receptors; and
- minimize potential conflicts with existing planning efforts within the City of Sacramento.

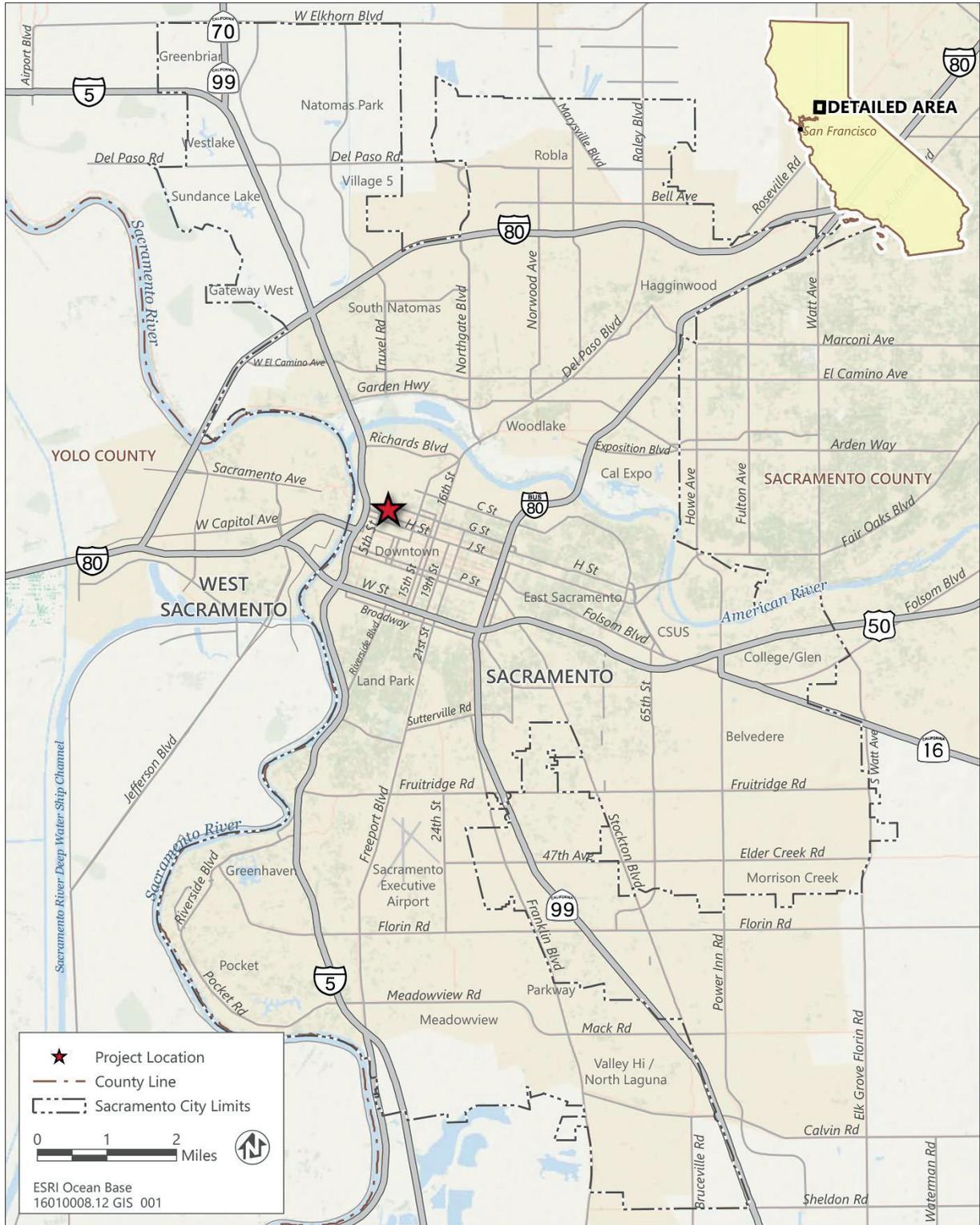


Figure 1 Project Vicinity



Figure 2 Project Site

Description of Proposed Project: With the City of Sacramento's continued implementation of both the Central City Specific Plan and the Railyards Specific Plan EIR, maintaining SMUD's ability to provide reliable electrical service within the downtown and the surrounding area is essential. The project involves the decommissioning and removal of outdated Station A equipment that is currently present at the project site and replacing existing equipment within the outdoor area between the historic Station A building and the Mercy Housing Community to the east with new outdoor substation equipment.

As part of the decommissioning of Station A, SMUD would remove and dismantle existing substation equipment, including protection and control equipment within the historic Station A building and transformers and switchgear within the outdoor switchyard. Decommissioning activities would also include the removal of oil pump equipment from within the historic Station A building. Equipment from inside the historic Station A building would be removed through existing doorways and no modifications to the structure would occur. Some equipment may need to be dismantled prior to removal. Additionally, two existing underground 115 kilovolt (kV) lines located within the Government Alley to the north of the site would be abandoned in place.

Once equipment associated with Station A has been decommissioned and the existing yard has been cleared, new equipment would be assembled and installed on site. The proposed substation would include two 115kV underground transmission lines, two 115/21kV transformers, a 21kV main-tie-main switchgear metal building structure with three feeder breakers per bay, and a control building. Station H would tie into the new Station G (currently under construction) via two new 115kV lines to be located within Government Alley, immediately north of the project site. The proposed electrical equipment to be located on site is anticipated to be no taller than existing Station A equipment currently located at the site, which is approximately 26 feet.

A canopy structure is proposed to be located between the new Station H substation yard and the historic Station A building. The canopy would be approximately the same height as the existing equipment in the outdoor area with a maximum height expected to be approximately 26 feet in height at its tallest point. The canopy roof would be angled and is designed to shield the control building in the event that bricks fall from the exterior of the historic Station A building.

Station H would include two 115kV underground transmission lines, two 115/21kV transformers, a 21kV main-tie-main switchgear with three feeder breakers per bay, and a control building. Two new 115kV lines would be installed beneath Government Alley to connect Station H to Station G. Excavation associated with construction of these new connections and installation of new equipment would reach a depth of 15 to 30 feet below ground surface, though piles needed for seismic support could go as deep as 55 feet. SMUD anticipates excavation and removal of existing soil and import of backfill to re-establish grade within the site, though removal and import volumes are not yet known. Lighting within the project site would consist of new light-emitting diode light sources. Lighting fixtures would be selected to complement the proposed site function and surrounding visual character.

Project construction activities would also include removal of the existing concrete block

wall, located along H Street, and replacement with a new wall that would shield views of the new equipment from H Street. Some features within the new Station H yard may help shield views from the adjacent the Mercy Housing Community.

Construction equipment and materials staging area would be located within nearby vacant land. While the staging areas have not yet been identified and would be identified by the contractor based on availability at the time, it is assumed that staging areas would be within 5 miles of the project site. During construction, access to the project site would be maintained, with the primary access point for construction equipment, deliveries, and workers located from Government Alley to avoid potential conflicts with Light Rail trains along H Street. Therefore, construction activities would require a temporary closure of Government Alley.

The decommissioning of Station A is anticipated to begin in the second half of 2022 and would be completed by early 2023. The construction of Station H is anticipated to begin soon after the decommission of Station A and would be completed in 2024. Construction intensity and hours would be in accordance with the City's Noise Ordinance, contained in Title 8, Chapter 8.68 of the Sacramento City Code. Construction would be limited to the hours between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and between the hours of 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Sunday.

Potential Approvals and Permits Required: Elements of the project could be subject to permitting and/or approval authority of other agencies. As the lead agency pursuant to CEQA, SMUD is responsible for considering the adequacy of the CEQA documentation and determining if the project should be approved. Other potential permits required from other agencies could include:

State

- **California Department of Transportation:** Permits for movement of oversized or excessive loads on State Highways.

Local

- **Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD):** Authority to Construct/Permit to Operate pursuant to SMAQMD Regulation 2 (Rule 201 et seq.).
- **City of Sacramento:**
 - Tree removal permit—to comply with the City of Sacramento Tree Ordinance
 - Transmission Facilities Permit – to comply with Sacramento City Code requirements
 - Building permits—to comply with Sacramento City Code requirements
 - Encroachment permit
 - Improvement Plans
 - Grading Permit

- Design Review
- **County of Sacramento:** connection to the sewer system

Potential Environmental Effects: The EIR will describe the significant direct and indirect environmental impacts of the project. The EIR also will evaluate the cumulative impacts of the project, defined as impacts that could be exacerbated when considered in conjunction with other related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. SMUD anticipates that the project could result in potentially significant environmental impacts in the following resource areas, which will be further evaluated in the EIR:

- **Cultural Resources:** Potential disturbances of known and unknown historic and/or archaeological resources.
- **Tribal Cultural Resources:** Potential disturbance of tribal cultural resources.

These potential impacts will be assessed and discussed in detail in the EIR, and feasible and practicable mitigation measures will be recommended to reduce any identified significant or potentially significant impacts.

SMUD anticipates that the project would not result in significant environmental impacts in the following resource areas, which will not be further evaluated in the EIR: aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise and vibration, population and housing, public services, recreation, traffic and transportation, utilities, and wildfire. SMUD has prepared an Initial Study (IS) that provides analysis of these resource areas and provides mitigation measures as needed.

Comment Period: Written comments on the NOP can be sent anytime during the NOP review period which begins November 4, 2020 and ends on December 8, 2020 at 5:00 pm. Please send your written or electronic responses, with appropriate contact information, to the following address:

Rob Ferrera
Sacramento Municipal Utility District
Environmental Management
P.O. Box 15830 MS B203
Sacramento, CA 95852-1830
rob.ferrera@smud.org

Digital copies of the IS and NOP are available on the internet at: smud.org/stationH.
Hardcopies of the IS and NOP are available for public review at the following locations:

Sacramento Municipal Utility District
Customer Service Center
6301 S Street
Sacramento, CA 95817

Sacramento Municipal Utility District
East Campus Operations Center
4401 Bradshaw Road
Sacramento, CA 95827

Scoping Session: Written comments on the NOP may also be provided during the virtual open house scoping session to be held **November 16, 2020** from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. During the scoping session, project information can be discussed with SMUD staff and written NOP comments will also be accepted via email. If you have questions regarding the IS and NOP or the scoping session, please contact Rob Ferrera at the email address shown above. Access to the public meeting will be provided through a meeting link found at smud.org/stationH.