



County of San Joaquin
Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Notice of Public Scoping Meeting
Griffith Energy Storage Project

Date: December 28, 2022
To: All Interested Agencies, Organizations, Persons, and State Clearinghouse
From: San Joaquin County
Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Notice of Public Scoping Meeting for the Griffith Energy Storage Project

Project Title: Griffith Energy Storage Project
Project Number: PA-2200137 (SA)
Project Address: 20042 W. Patterson Pass Road, Tracy, CA 95377
Project Applicant: Griffith Energy Storage, LLC.

Lead Agency/Contact: County of San Joaquin Community Development Department
Stephanie Stowers, Senior Planner
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209-468-9653

Comment Period: December 28, 2022 – January 27, 2023

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) has been prepared to notify agencies and interested parties that the County of San Joaquin (County), as Lead Agency, is commencing preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to evaluate the potential environmental effects associated with the Griffith Energy Storage (Project).

The County is requesting input from interested individuals, organizations, and agencies regarding the scope and content of the environmental analysis to be included in the upcoming draft EIR. In accordance with CEQA, the County requests that agencies provide comments on the environmental issues related to the statutory responsibilities of their particular agency. This NOP contains a description of the Project, its location, and a preliminary determination of the environmental resource topics to be addressed in the draft EIR.

Documents related to the Project will be available for review at the County's website at:

<https://www.sjgov.org/commdev/cgi-bin/cdyn.exe/file/APD%20Documents/PA-2200137/Notice%20of%20Preparation.pdf>

The 30-day public review period for the NOP is from December 28, 2022 through January 27, 2023. In accordance with the time limits mandated by State law, if there are concerns about the scope and content of the information to be addressed in the EIR, written comments may be submitted via email or by mail to Shawna Brekke-Read, Contract Planner (sbrekkeread@migcom.com). All written comments should be

submitted at the earliest possible date but must be submitted no later than close of business, January 27, 2023. Public agencies should identify the contact person for your agency in your written comments.

Project Location: The Project site is approximately 0.9 mile southwest of Interstate 580 and approximately 5 miles southwest of the city of Tracy adjacent to Pacific Gas and Electric's (PG&E) Tesla Substation, as shown on Figure 1. The Project site consists of approximately 32 acres of a 160-acre parcel (Assessor Parcel Number 209-100-19).

The approximately 32-acre Project site is located at 20042 W. Patterson Pass Road within unincorporated San Joaquin County, California (see Figure 1, Project Location). Currently, the site is grazing land with existing residences. The Project is bounded to the north by grazing land, rural residences, the West Patterson Pass, and the Union Pacific Railroad. To the east lies grazing land and open space. Rural residences, grazing land, and open space bound the Project to the south. The Project is bounded by rural residences, grazing land, and the PG&E Tesla Substation to the west within Alameda County.

The County of San Joaquin General Plan Land Use Map designates the Project site as General Agricultural, and the County's Zoning Map identifies the site as Agricultural General-160.

Regional access to the Project site is provided by Interstate 580, located approximately 0.9 miles to the northeast.

Project Description: The Project would involve the construction and operation of a 400-megawatt battery energy storage system to provide reliable and flexible power to the local electrical system. The Project would interconnect at the Tesla Substation immediately adjacent to the site in Alameda County via a 230-kilovolt interconnection generation tie (gen-tie) line. The energy storage facility is anticipated to house lithium-ion batteries totaling 400 megawatts of energy (see Figure 2, Site Plan). Project construction would be in 2024 and is anticipated to come online in 2025 or later.

The Project would contain pad-mounted energy storage units, in addition to inverters, supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) equipment, a collector substation, and an interconnection gen-tie line to the Tesla Substation. The Project would also include related and supporting facilities such as on-site service roads, gates and security fencing, and temporary laydown and construction areas. Construction is expected to begin as early as 2024 and be completed in approximately 12 months.

ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM

Batteries

Individual lithium-ion, or similar technology, battery cells form the core of the energy storage system. The battery cells are assembled either in series or parallel connection in sealed battery modules. The battery modules would be installed in self-supporting racks electrically connected either in a series or parallel to each other. The individual battery racks are connected in series or parallel configuration to deliver the energy storage system power rating. At this time, the battery technology for the Project has not yet been finalized; the battery type would be selected based on the technology available at the time of construction.

Enclosure Units and Controller

Multiple self-contained storage system enclosures would house the batteries, described above, as well as the battery storage system controller. The energy storage system controller is a multi-level control system designed to provide a hierarchical system of controls for the battery modules, power conversion system (PCS), medium voltage system, and up to the point of connection with the electrical grid. The controllers ensure that the energy storage system effectively responds to grid emergency conditions and provides a secondary safety system designed to safely shut down the facility. The storage system enclosure would also house required heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), and fire protection systems.

Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning Units

Each enclosure would be equipped with HVAC systems for thermal management of the batteries. The power for the HVAC system would be provided through a connection to the on-site station service transformer with connection lines installed above and/or below ground.

Fire Safety

Fire detection measures would be incorporated in the Project design in accordance with National Fire Protection Association safety standards. The fire safety system will include remote monitoring 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Power Conversion System

The PCS consists of an inverter, protection equipment, direct current (DC) and alternating current (AC) circuit breakers, filter equipment, equipment terminals, and connection cabling system. Electric energy is transferred from the existing power grid to the Project batteries during a battery charging cycle, and from the Project batteries to the power grid during a battery discharge cycle. The PCS converts electric energy from AC to DC when the energy is transferred from the grid to the battery, and from DC to AC when the energy is transferred from the battery to the grid. The energy conversion is enabled by a bi-directional inverter that connects the DC battery system to the AC electrical grid.

The PCS would also include a transformer that converts the AC side output of the inverter to medium AC voltage to increase the overall efficiency of the energy storage system and to protect the PCS in the event of system electrical faults.

Interconnection Generation Transmission Line

The proposed battery energy storage system would deliver power to the Tesla Substation located adjacent to the Project site in Alameda County through a new 230 kilovolt gen-tie line. The Applicant would construct the gen-tie from the Project substation to the point south of the Tesla Substation shown on Figure 1. The gen-tie line would require new steel, tubular poles up to approximately 165 feet in height. The poles may be A-frame, H-frame, monopole, or a combination thereof. The number and height of the poles would be finalized during detailed design. PG&E would be responsible for siting, design, and construction of the gen-tie line to their property boundary and within the Tesla Substation. As shown on Figure 1, PG&E may elect to install the interconnection via an overhead line or underground from the point of connection to the substation.

Ancillary Facilities

Site Access and Parking

Access, including emergency access, onto the Project site would be provided from Patterson Pass Road to Midway Road to a driveway that leads to the Project site. Internal access roads would be gravel or aggregate base depending on the final site geotechnical report. Site access would comply with the CalFire and/or San Joaquin County Fire Protection District requirements. On-site parking spaces would be provided as needed, in accordance with San Joaquin County requirements.

Perimeter Fence

The perimeter of the Project site would be enclosed by a 6-foot-tall chain-link fence topped with 1 foot of 3-strand barbed wire. The purpose of the fence would be to prevent unauthorized access to the site. In addition, an approximately 8-foot-high perimeter security fence topped with approximately 1 foot of barbed wire would be installed around the on-site substation.

Lighting

Low-elevation, controlled security lighting would be installed at the access gate and the entrance to the energy storage structures. The lighting would only switch on when personnel enter the area (through either motion-sensor or manual activation [switch]). All safety and emergency services signs would be lit when the lights are on. The lighting would be shielded so the light is directed downward. Lighting would be only in areas where it is required for safety, security, or operations. All lighting would be directed on-site and would include shielding as necessary to minimize illumination of the night sky or spillover onto adjacent properties.

Stormwater Facilities

The site drainage is designed to follow the natural drainage pattern of the site. The Project would include swales and armored outlets to direct stormwater, as shown in the preliminary grading and site plan provided as Figure 2, and in accordance with San Joaquin County and state of California standards. Site preparation and construction activities would be performed in accordance with a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), or similar plan that incorporates stormwater best management practices (BMPs) to reduce the adverse effects of erosion and sedimentation. Such practices would include, for example, the use of water trucks to manage dust; silt fencing, straw wattles and temporary catch basins, and inlet

filters to control stormwater; and truck tire muck shakers, or similar devices, to prevent mud and debris from being carried onto roadways.

Landscaping

The Project would not include landscaping.

PROPOSED SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Based on the Lead Agency's understanding of the environmental issues associated with the proposed project, the topics anticipated to require analysis in the draft EIR will include, but not be limited to, the following: aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, tribal and cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, recreation, transportation, utilities and public services, and wildfire. The Lead Agency will not prepare an Initial Study for this project.

In accordance with Section 15082(a)(1)(C) of the State CEQA Guidelines, below is a summary of the potential environmental effects of the proposed project for each environmental resource to be analyzed in the draft EIR.

Aesthetics: The proposed project may result in environmental impacts to aesthetic resources. The EIR will evaluate whether implementation of the project could result in significant alterations to viewsheds and visual character as well as lighting and glare conditions. Visual simulations of the proposed project under post-development conditions will be prepared.

Agriculture and Forestry Resources: The proposed project may result in environmental impacts to agricultural resources. The EIR will evaluate whether implementation of the project could result in adverse impacts or loss of agricultural resources (temporary and permanent) in the County. The extent of potential resource loss will be identified as well as the extent of potential conflict with agricultural operations based on consultation with the County and agricultural stakeholders.

Air Quality: Air quality impacts are anticipated to be primarily limited to construction-related emissions. The EIR will identify current ambient air quality conditions of the County and will review and identify applicable federal, state, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, and County policies and regulations. The potential air quality impacts will be described based on the project-specific technical report.

Biological Resources: The proposed project may result in environmental impacts to biological resources. A summary of important biological resources (e.g., habitats, known locations of special-status species, movement corridors, designated critical habitat) will be mapped and provided in the EIR. The extent of potential impacts will be described based on the project-specific technical reports.

Tribal and Cultural Resources: The proposed project may result in environmental impacts to tribal and cultural resources. The cultural resources section of the EIR will describe the known resources on the project site and vicinity, if any, and potential for impacts to those resources. If necessary, mitigation and monitoring measures will be described. This section will be based on a Cultural Resources Technical Report.

Assembly Bill 52 involves formal consultation by the County with the potentially affected tribes. Formal notification by the County to California Native American tribes that have requested such notification of the project offering consultation under Assembly Bill 52 were prepared and sent September 21, 2022.

Energy: The proposed project may result in environmental impacts to energy resources. As part of the preparation of the project-specific Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Energy Technical Report, energy consumed by construction and operation of the proposed project will be estimated and assessed.

Geology and Soils: The proposed project may result in environmental impacts to geology and soils. The EIR will provide mapping and technical information on geologic and seismic stability of the project site including information on soil conditions.

Greenhouse Gases Emissions: The proposed project is anticipated to benefit the County and state efforts to reduce GHG emissions during construction and has the potential for GHG emissions to be reduced as a result of renewable energy storage. Nonetheless, the project-specific Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Energy Technical Report cited above will assess the GHG emissions associated with project construction and operation.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials: The proposed project may result in environmental impacts with regard to hazards and hazardous materials. The extent of potential exposure of County residents to hazards and

hazardous materials will be addressed in the EIR. The EIR will identify and address both natural and human-made hazards (e.g., wildland fires, hazardous materials and exposure to contamination, and potential aviation impacts).

Hydrology and Water Quality: The proposed project may result in environmental impacts to hydrology and water quality resources. The extent of the project’s impact to surface water features and groundwater resources will be analyzed. Any areas where groundwater resources are limited, and additional demand may result in overdraft concerns will be identified. Applicable federal, state, and County policies and regulations (e.g., implementation of NPDES permit requirements to protect water quality) will be identified and addressed.

Land Use and Planning: The proposed project may result in environmental impacts to land use and planning. This section of the EIR will address whether the project would result in conflicts with the County’s General Plan and associated land use plans and ordinances that could result in physical impacts to the environment. The section will also include the identification of any land use conflicts associated with the project’s proximity to adjacent land uses.

Mineral Resources: The proposed project may result in environmental impacts to mineral resources. The EIR will include the identification of important mineral resource sites.

Noise: The proposed project may result in environmental impacts regarding noise during construction and operation. Project construction would adhere to current County noise standards and policies. The extent of potential noise impacts will be described based on the conclusions of the project-specific Noise Analysis Technical Report.

Population and Housing: The project is not expected to result in any significant changes to population or housing in the County.

Public Services: The proposed project may result in environmental impacts to public services. The EIR will address impacts to fire, police, school, and other public services.

Recreation: The project is not expected to result in any significant changes to recreation.

Transportation: Potential traffic impacts are anticipated to be limited to construction activities. The extent of potential traffic impacts will be described in the EIR based on the conclusions of the project-specific Transportation Impact Study.

Utilities: The project may result in environmental impacts to public services and utilities. The EIR will identify where transmission facilities and associated capacity are available for use by the project.

Wildfire: The proposed project may result in environmental impacts to wildfire. The EIR will address potential impacts to wildfire both during construction and operation.

The EIR will also address all other CEQA-mandated topics, including cumulative impacts and Project Alternatives.

A Notice of Availability will be published and circulated at a later date indicating that the draft EIR will be available for public review and comment.

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVES TO BE EVALUATED IN THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
In accordance with Section 15126.6 of the State CEQA Guidelines, an EIR must “describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the Project, or to the location of the Project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the Project, but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the Project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives.” As required by CEQA, the draft EIR will evaluate a No Project Alternative. Aside from the No Project Alternative, the County will evaluate alternatives including reduced size and other sites, including areas close to the substation. The alternatives will be analyzed at a qualitative level of detail in the draft EIR for comparison against the impacts identified for the proposed project, consistent with the requirements of CEQA. As required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 (e)(2), the draft EIR will identify the environmentally superior alternative, including one other than the No Project Alternative.

INTENDED USES OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The draft EIR will evaluate the environmental effects associated with implementation of the Griffith Energy Storage Project. The draft EIR is intended for public participation and disclosure, and ultimately for consideration by the County in deciding about whether or not to approve the Conditional Use Permit, as well as for use by other agencies, as needed. Upon incorporation of public and agency comments on the

draft EIR, the County anticipates preparing and publishing a final EIR. The Planning Commission will then determine whether to certify the EIR in compliance with the CEQA Statute and Guidelines; and the County and other agencies, as needed, will determine whether to issue permits for the project. It is expected that these approvals could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Site Approval to operate an electricity storage facility
- San Joaquin County Building Code, including:
 - 2019 California Building Code
 - 2019 California Mechanical Code
 - California Plumbing Code
 - 2019 California Electrical Code
- California Energy Code
- California Green Building Standards Code
- California Fire Code
- San Joaquin County Municipal Code and Zoning Ordinance
- Tracy Rural Fire District requirements
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Title 14
- San Joaquin County Office of Emergency Services
- Alameda County Environmental Protection Department requirements
- San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District requirements

Responsible Agencies

For the purposes of CEQA, the term “Responsible Agency” includes all public agencies (other than federal agencies) beyond 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 Project. Responsible Agencies may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- San Joaquin Regional Transit District: Potential roadway encroachment permits for transporting large pieces of equipment and other activities.
- California Department of Transportation: Potential special permit for the movement of vehicles and loads exceeding statutory size and weight limitations (California Vehicle Code Division 15).
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board: A Construction General Permit for management of stormwater during decommissioning and construction activities and a Notice of Intent as required under Clean Water Act Section 402 of the NPDES program.
- San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District: Authority to construct, permit to operate.
- San Joaquin Council of Governments: Approval of participation and certificate of payment confirming participation in the San Joaquin Multi-Species and Habitat Conservation Plan.

Public Scoping Comment Period and Meeting

Public Scoping Comment Period: The County has established a 30-day public scoping period from December 28, 2022 through January 27, 2023. During the scoping period, the County’s intent is to disseminate Project information to the public and solicit comments from agencies, organizations, and interested parties, including nearby residents and business owners, regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR, including mitigation measures or Project alternatives to reduce potential environmental effects. During this period, this NOP may be accessed electronically at the following website:

<https://www.sjgov.org/commdev/cgi-bin/cdyn.exe/file/APD%20Documents/PA-2200137/Notice%20of%20Preparation.pdf>

A hard copy of the NOP is available for review at the San Joaquin County Community Development Department on Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (except during office closures):

San Joaquin County Community Development
Department 1810 East Hazelton Avenue
Stockton, CA 95205

Scoping Meeting: Rather than conducting an in-person meeting, Executive Order N-80-20 allows local governments to hold meetings via teleconferencing while still meeting state transparency requirements. Therefore, the Project's Scoping Meeting will be held online, through a webinar type format. The Scoping Meeting will involve a presentation about the Project and the environmental review process and schedule. The purpose of the meeting is to facilitate the receipt of written comments about the scope and content of the environmental analysis to be addressed in the draft EIR. No decisions about the Project will be made at the Scoping Meeting. A separate public hearing for entitlement requests will be scheduled after the completion of the draft EIR. The date, time, and website of the Project's Scoping Meeting are as follows:

Date and Time: January 19, 2023 at 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

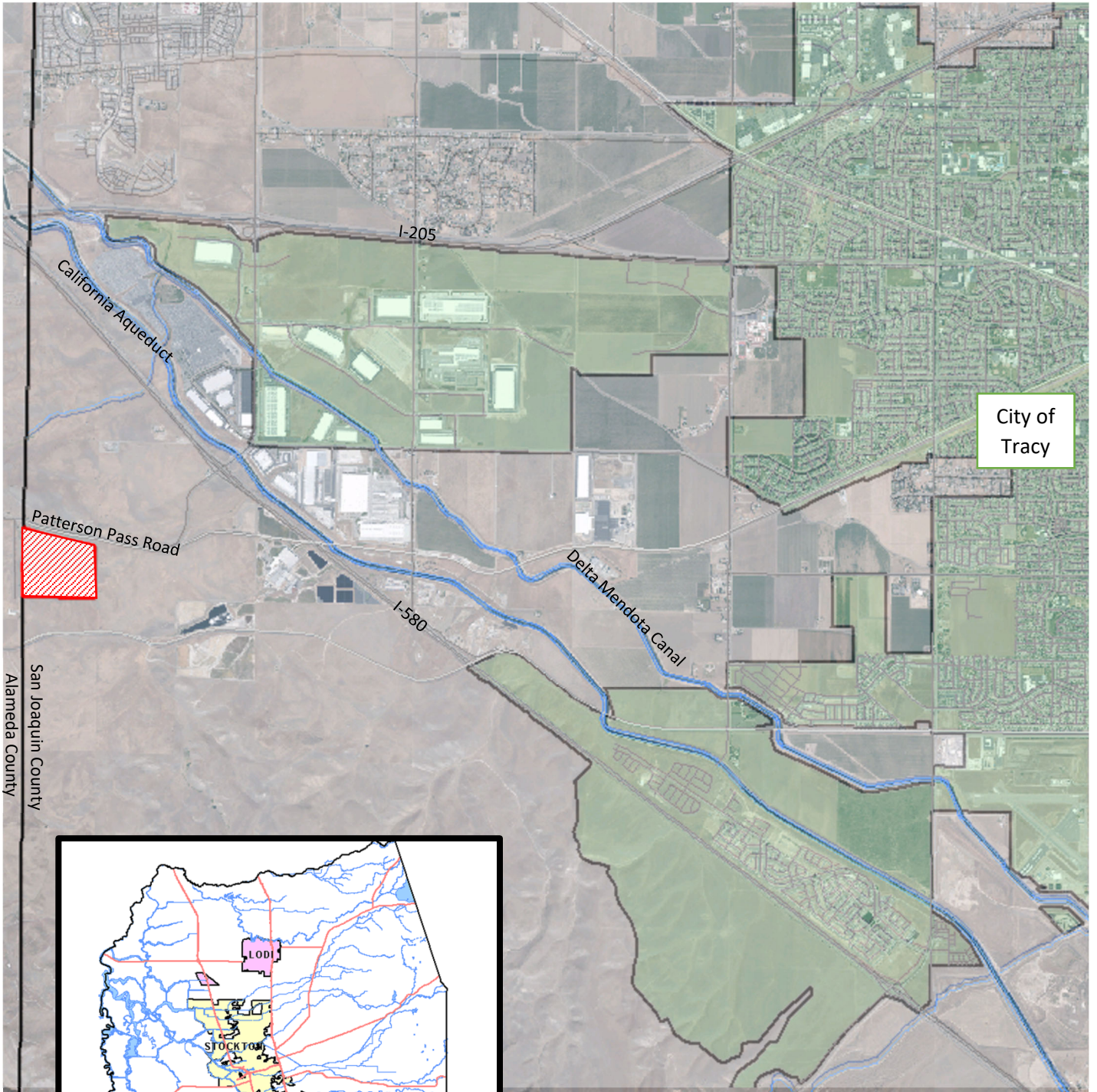
Scoping Meeting Link:: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NjQwMwQwNzltMjNhOC00OWJLWEZyMjMtMzAzOTNkZmQ5OGly%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%223cff5075-176a-400d-860a-54960a7c7e51%22%2c%220id%22%3a%2281590104-8f6f-42be-bc35-ca42fc23f771%22%7d

Scoping Comments: All scoping comments must be received in writing by 5:00 p.m. on January 27, 2022, which marks the end of the 30-day public scoping period. All written comments should indicate an associated contact person for the agency or organization, if applicable, and reference the Project name in the subject line. Pursuant to CEQA, responsible agencies are requested to indicate their statutory responsibilities in connection with the Project when responding. Please mail or email comments and direct any questions to the following contact person:

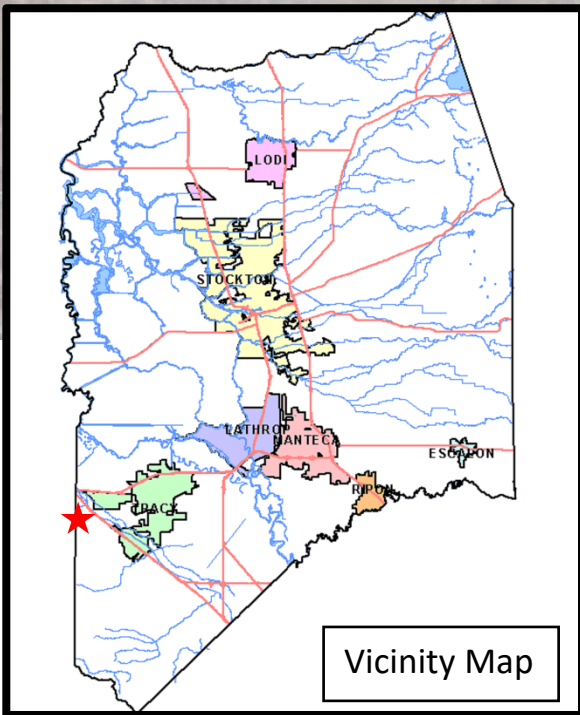
Shawna Brekke-Read, Contract Planner
MIG, Inc.
800 Hearst Avenue
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Phone: 510.845.7549
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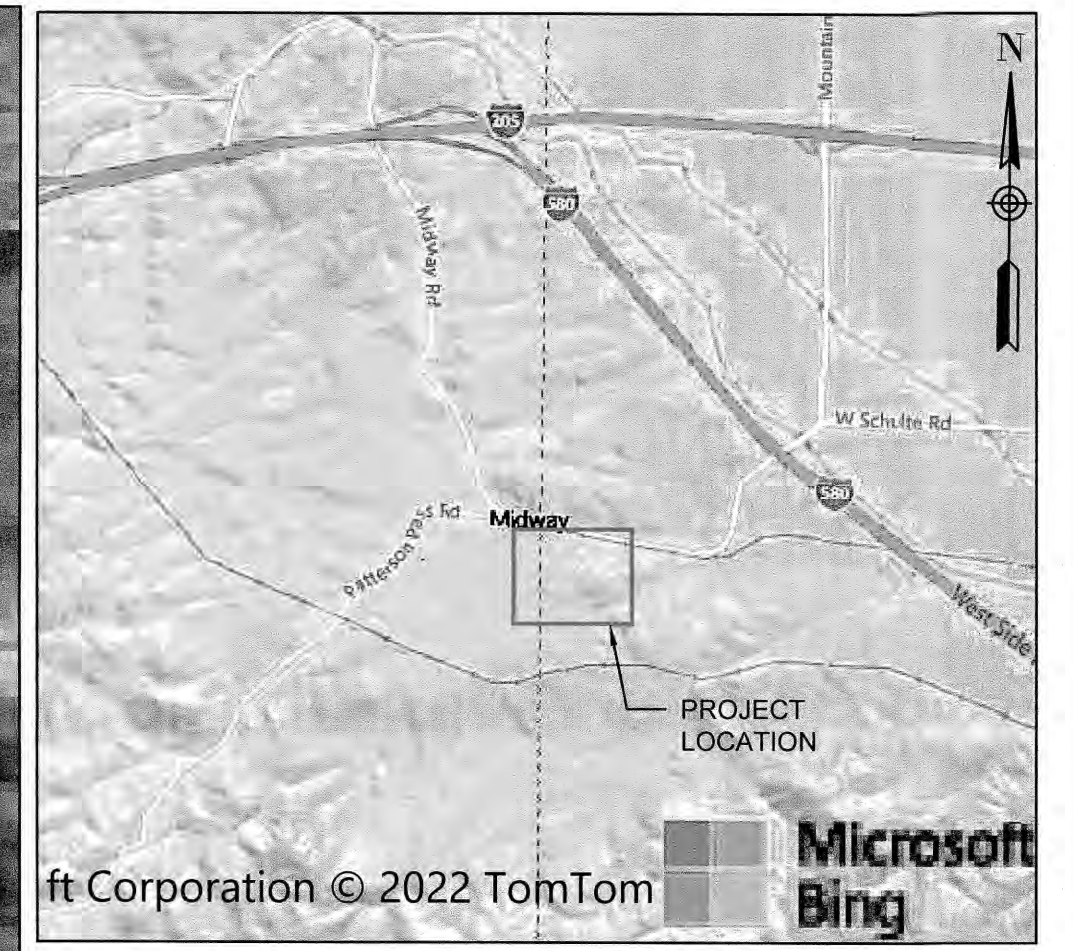
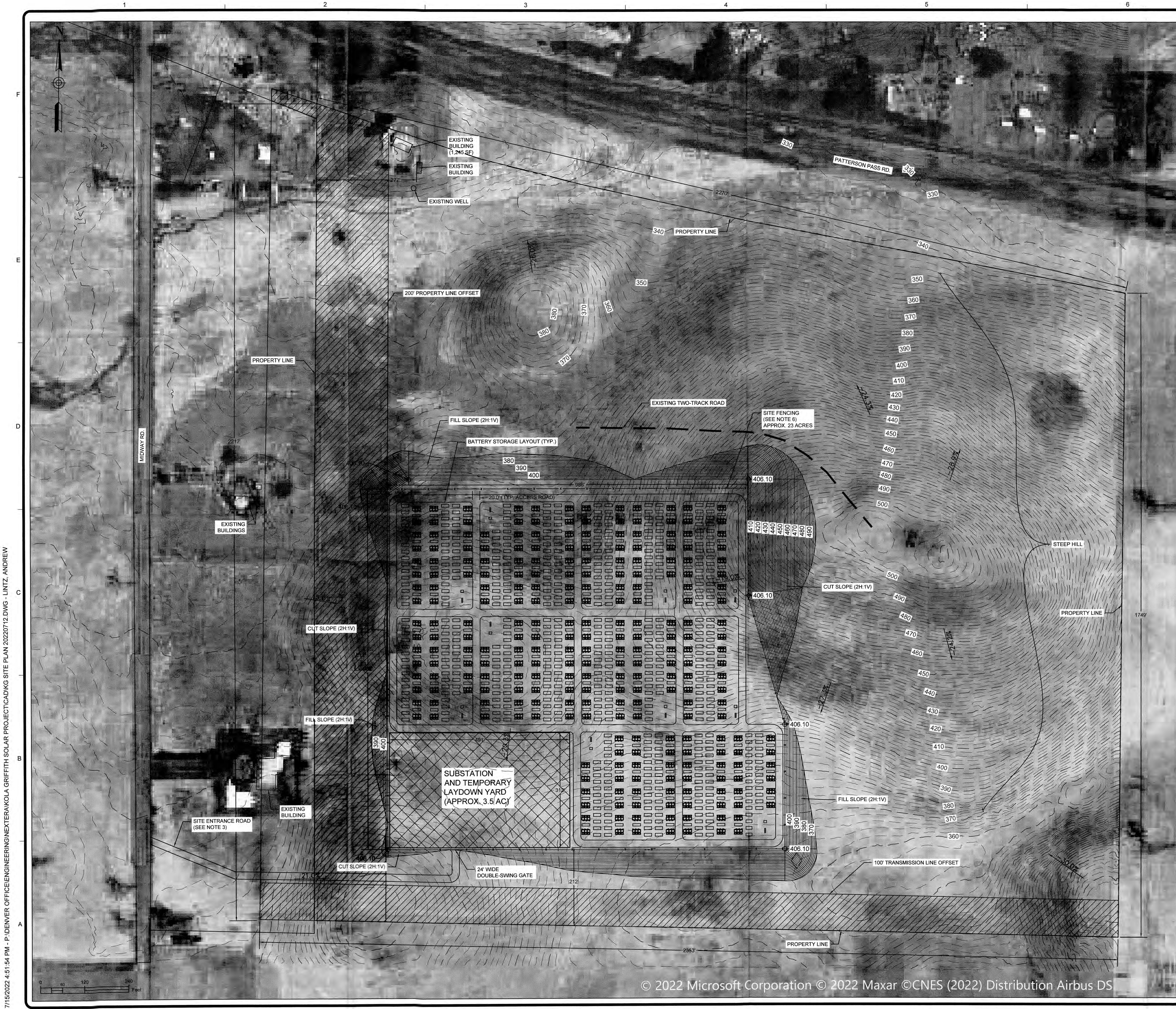
Attachments: Figure 1. Project Location
Figure 2. Site Plan

Exhibit A



San Joaquin County
Alameda County





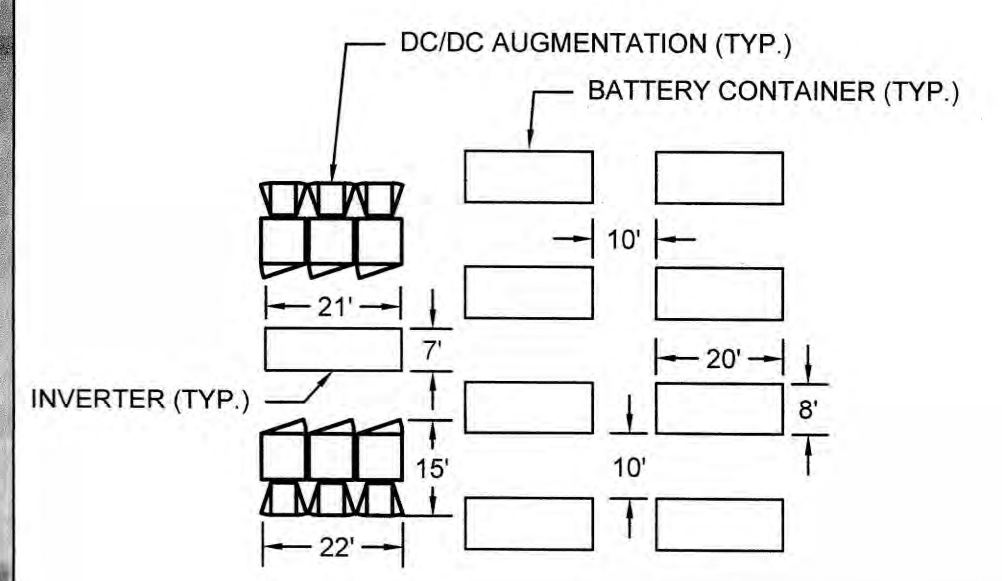
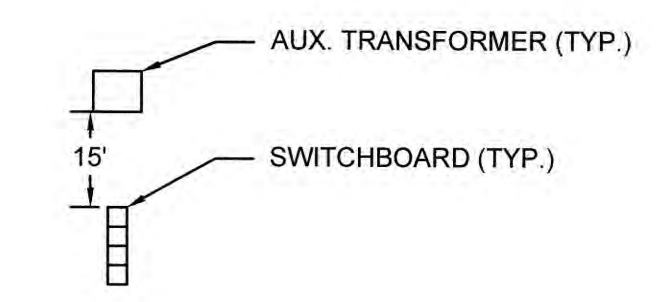
VICINITY MAP
SCALE: 1" = 5000'

SITE PLAN
Application # **PA2200137**
Received By S.H. On 8/2/22

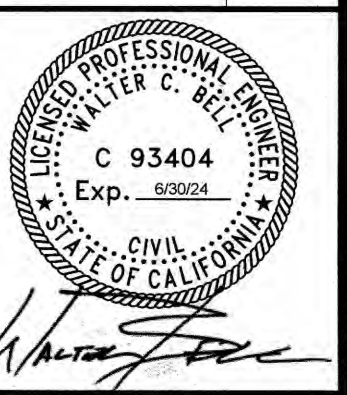
CUT/FILL TABLE

CUT (CY)	FILL (CY)	NET (CY)
406,924	405,641	1,283 CUT

- NOTES:
1. ALL CUT AND FILL SLOPES 2H:1V.
 2. BESS PAD AND SUBSTATION AT ELEVATION 406.1 FT.
 3. ALL GRAVEL ACCESS ROADS ARE 20' WIDE.
 4. THE LAYDOWN YARD WILL BE COVERED IN GRAVEL.
 5. NO TREES OR EXISTING STRUCTURES WILL BE REMOVED FOR THIS PROJECT.
 6. CALIFORNIA AQUEDUCT LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 1 MILE NORTHEAST OF PROJECT.
 7. STANDARD 7 FOOT CHAIN LINK FENCE (NO BARBED WIRE) TO BE INSTALLED AROUND PERIMETER OF SITE WITH ENTRANCE AND PERSONNEL GATES.



NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION



MARK	DATE	DESCRIPTION
A	07/15/22	ISSUED FOR REVIEW

NEXTERA ENERGY RESOURCES, LLC
ALAMEDA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
KOLA-GRIFFITH SITE DEVELOPMENT

PROJ:
DESN: AML
DRWN: CAN
CHKD: JPP

C-01