



San Benito County Resource Management Agency Public Works / Planning & Building / Parks / Integrated Waste

2301 Technology Pkwy • Hollister CA 95023 • (831) 637-5313 • Fax (831) 636-4176

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

DATE: 10/20/2023

TO: Responsible, Trustee, Other Interested Public Agencies, and Other Interested Parties

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the San Benito Ag Center Conditional Use Permit (County File No. PLN220052)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that San Benito County will serve as the Lead Agency in preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed **San Benito Ag Center** (the “project”). In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, the County has issued this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to provide responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and other interested parties with information describing the project and its potential environmental effects. The County is requesting your input on the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency’s statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by the County when considering your permit or other approval for the project. The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are included below.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD

This NOP is available for public review and comment pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15082(b). The 30-day public comment period during which San Benito County will receive comments on the NOP for the EIR begins October 20, 2023, 2023 and ends November 20, 2023. Responses must be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than the end of the 30-day comment period.

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

San Benito County Resource Management Agency will hold a public EIR scoping meetings for the project. This meeting will be held on November 1, 2023 at 6 p.m. The scoping meeting will include a description of the project and the environmental review process. The primary goal of the scoping meeting is to obtain the public’s input on the EIR analysis. Responsible agencies and members of the public are invited to attend and provide input on the scope of the EIR.

Date and Time: November 1, 2023, at 6:00 PM
Location: Administration - Board of Supervisors Chambers
481 Fourth Street, 1st Floor Hollister, California 95023

Zoom Info: The public may also join this meeting using Zoom per the following details:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84455220934?pwd=KapSgfZUxRlstkUkJmYb9WVzMRybt.1>
Webinar ID: **844 5522 0934**
Passcode: **344725**

Telephone Info: +1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose) or +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

PROJECT LOCATION

As shown in [Figure 1 Regional Location](#), the project site is located approximately 10 miles west of the City of Hollister and approximately eight miles south of the City of Gilroy in San Benito County.

As shown in [Figure 2 Project Location](#), the approximately 15-acre project site (APN 012-010-031) is located on the northwest intersection of Searle Road and Highway 129 in San Benito County, California.

The project site is fallow that has is not in active agricultural use. It is annually plowed or mowed to control weeds. There is an existing well located at the southeast corner of the site and an existing gas easement extends southwest to northeast through the project site. The topography generally slopes down from north to south. Short Road, accessed from Highway 129, is a private dirt road that provides access into the project site.

GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING DESIGNATIONS

The project site has a General Plan Land Use Designation of Commercial Regional. This General Plan Designation is intended for properties located on major roadway interchanges. The Commercial Regional designation is intended “to provide areas that function as destinations for commercial activity serving the regional population. This designation intends to accommodate the location of commercial uses at key intersections along Interstate 101 and other major State Routes. Permitted uses could include shopping centers, truck and automobile stations, tourist-serving commercial uses, and hotels/motels.

The project site is zoned (C-1) Commercial Thoroughfare which is consistent with the General Plan Land Use designation of Commercial Regional.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As shown in [Figure 3 Site Plan](#), the project consists of three main structures: a 16,450 square feet convenience store and food hall, a 12,500 square feet truck service building, and a 13,500 square feet cold storage building, for a total of 42,450 square feet. The project will also provide refueling services for trucks and automobiles. Three types of fuel are proposed – standard gas/diesel, compressed natural gas (CNG), and hydrogen fuel. To complement the building architecture, a 60-foot-tall water tower and a 50-foot-tall windmill would be constructed.

There would be parking for 105 trucks and 58 cars; and 20 loading spaces (for the cold storage building), for a total of 163 uncovered parking spaces. The project would also include six parking

spaces for recreational vehicles. Parking includes electric auxiliary power unit (APU) hookups for trucks to park and turn off their engine while waiting for a delivery/pick-up appointments and keep the refrigerated unit cold. Electric vehicle recharging stations will also be provided for automobiles.

Access for trucks will be from Highway 129, with an exit onto a new two-lane truck-only access road connecting to Searle Road. Two separate driveways from Searle Road would provide site access for automobile traffic. Searle Road and Highway 129 will be improved as part of the project.

The project would operate 24 hours per day, 365 days a year.

A conceptual illustration of the project is shown in [Figure 4 Conceptual Project Illustration](#).

PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVALS

The proposed project would require approval of a Conditional Use permit by the Planning Commission under San Benito County Code Chapter 25.16, section 25.16.023 applicable to the C-1 zoning district.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The EIR will address the potential physical environmental effects of the project for all of the environmental factors outlined in the CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G. The EIR will also address the cumulative impacts resulting from other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the area surrounding the project site.

Given the size and scope of the project, it is anticipated that there would be potentially significant environmental effects within some of the CEQA environmental topic areas. Therefore, the EIR will include and evaluate the following specific environmental categories related to the proposed project:

Included for Detailed EIR Analysis (Potentially Significant)	Excluded from Detailed EIR Analysis (Insignificant)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aesthetics ▪ Air Quality ▪ Biological Resources ▪ Cultural ▪ Geology & Soils ▪ Greenhouse Gas Emissions ▪ Hazards & Hazardous Materials ▪ Hydrology & Water Quality ▪ Land Use & Planning ▪ Noise & Vibration ▪ Septic System ▪ Transportation ▪ Tribal Cultural Resources ▪ Wildfire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agricultural Resources ▪ Energy Conservation ▪ Mineral Resources ▪ Population Housing & Employment ▪ Public Services ▪ Recreation ▪ Utilities & Service Systems

COMMENTING ON THE SCOPE OF THE EIR

We are requesting your input on the scope and content of the environmental information appropriate to your agency’s statutory responsibilities or of interest to you or your organization. Specifically, we are requesting the following:

1. Identify significant environmental effects and mitigation measures that you believe need to be explored in the EIR with supporting discussion of why you believe these effects may be significant;
2. Describe special studies and other information that you believe are necessary for the County to analyze the significant environmental effects, alternatives, and mitigation measures you have identified;
3. For public agencies that provide infrastructure and public services, identify any facilities or improvements that will be required to provide services to the project;
4. Indicate whether staff from your agency would like to meet with County staff to discuss the scope and content of the EIR’s environmental documentation;
5. Provide the name, title, and contact information for the designated person from your agency or organization that we can contact regarding your comments; and
6. Identify alternatives that you believe need to be explored in further detail in the EIR.

Once the EIR process is complete, the County will determine whether the EIR has been completed in accordance with CEQA. The County will consider certification of the EIR at a public hearing and, only after certification of the EIR, the County may take action on the proposed project. Certification of an EIR does not constitute project approval.

The Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the EIR and the project application materials are available for public review Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., at the County RMA office located at 2301 Technology Parkway, Hollister, CA or online at the County's Planning Division web page under the section called "Current Major Planning Projects" (<https://www.cosb.us/departments/resource-management-agency/planning-and-land-use-division/san-benito-ag-center-pln220052>).

The NOP is being circulated for public review and comment for a period of 30 days beginning **October 20, 2023**. San Benito County RMA welcomes all comments regarding the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. All comments will be considered in the preparation of the EIR. **Written comments will be accepted by San Benito County RMA through 5:00 P.M. on November 20, 2023.** You may submit comments: (1) by U.S. mail; (2) by electronic mail (e-mail); or (3) by attending the public scoping meeting and submitting verbal comments at that time.

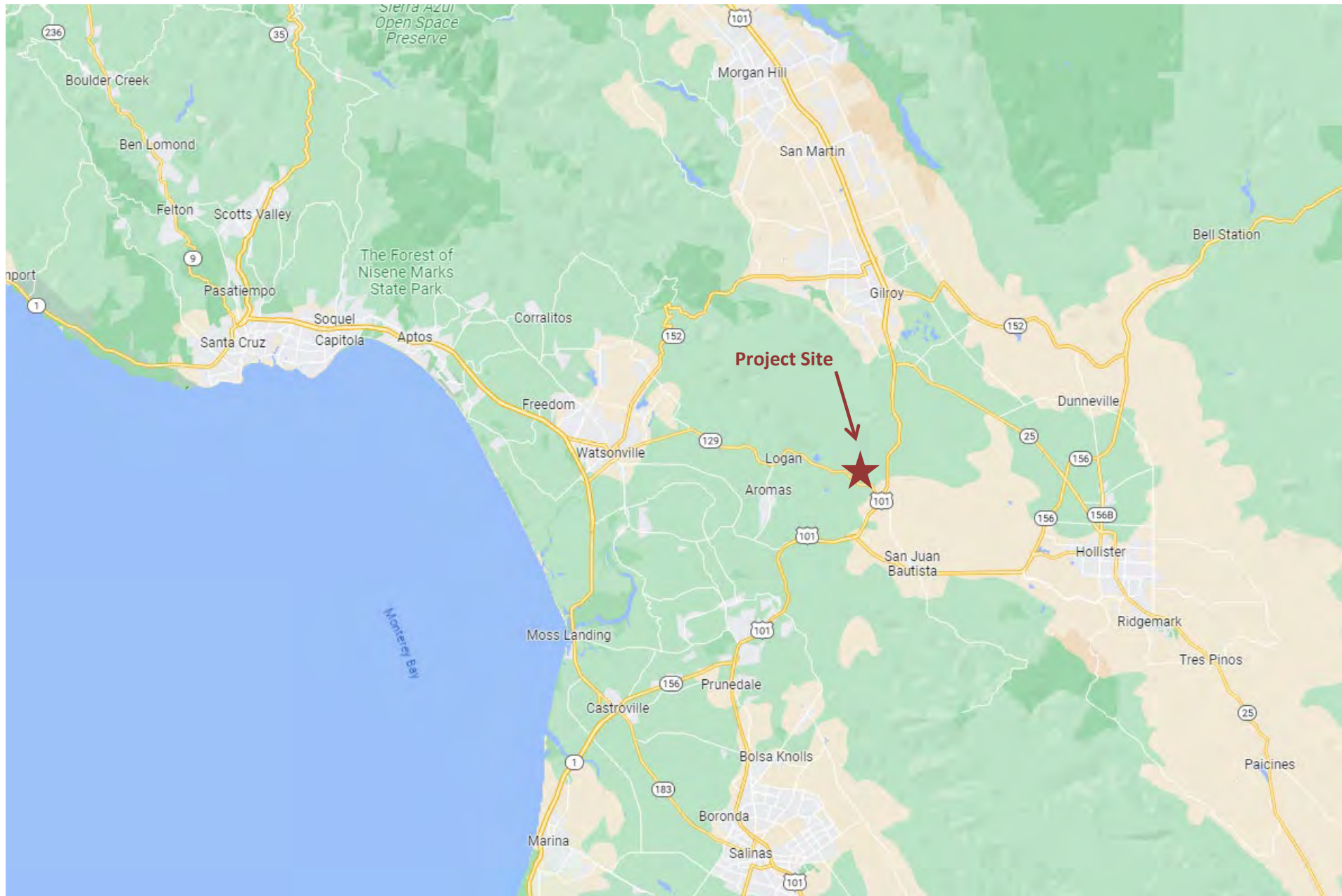
Comments provided by email should include "**San Benito Ag Center NOP Scoping Comments**" in the subject line, and the name and physical address of the commenter should be contained in the body of the email.

Please send all comments via mail or email to:

Arielle Goodspeed
Principal Planner
San Benito County
Resource Management Agency
2301 Technology Parkway
Hollister, California 95023
agoodspeed@cosb.us

ATTACHMENTS

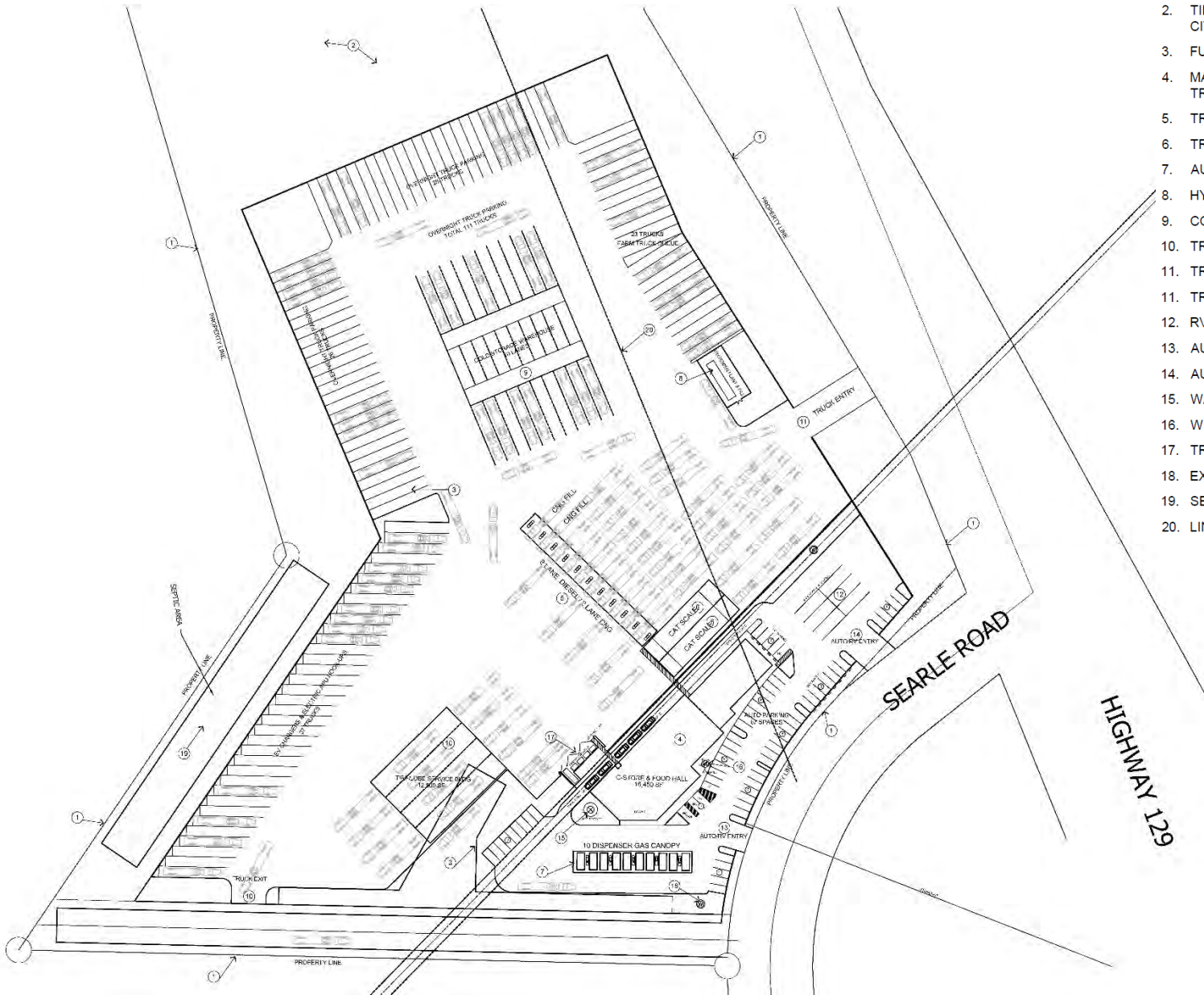
- Figure 1 Regional Location
- Figure 2 Project Location
- Figure 3 Project Site Plan
- Figure 4 Conceptual Project Illustration



Source: Google Maps and Kimley-Horn, 2023



Source: Google Earth and Kimley-Horn, 2023



1. PROPERTY LINE
2. TIERED NON DEVELOPED AREA OF PARCEL REFER TO CIVIL ENGINEERS DRAWING FOR THIS AREA
3. FUEL FARM
4. MAIN BUILDING - INCLUDES C-STORE, QSR CONCEPTS, TRUCKER SHOWERS, LAUNDRY AND LOUNGE
5. TRUCK FUEL CANOPY WITH DIESEL AND CNG
6. TRUCK WEIGH SCALES (CAT SCALES)
7. AUTOMOBILE GASOLINE CANOPY
8. HYDROGEN TRUCK FUEL
9. COLD STORAGE WAREHOUSE
10. TRUCK SERVICE BUILDING
11. TRUCK OUT ONLY DRIVEWAY - 40' WIDE
11. TRUCK IN ONLY DRIVEWAY - 40' WIDE
12. RV PARKING
13. AUTO DRIVEWAY - 30' WIDE
14. AUTO / RV DRIVEWAY - 40' WIDE
15. WATER TOWER - 60' TALL
16. WINDMILL - 50' TALL
17. TRASH YARD WITH COMPACTOR
18. EXISTING WELL HEAD
19. SEPTIC FIELD
20. LINE OF SCENIC COORIDOR

Source: Project Applicant (Ideation Design Group) 2023



Source: Project Applicant (Ideation), 2023