



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

701 OCEAN STREET, 4TH FLOOR, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
(831) 454-2580 FAX: (831) 454-2131 TIDD: (831) 454-2123

KATHLEEN MOLLOY, PLANNING DIRECTOR

www.sccoplanning.com

Date: March 24, 2020

To: All recipients on the distribution list (Attachment 1)

Lead Agency: County of Santa Cruz Planning Department

Contact: Stephanie Hansen, AICP, Principal Planner
Santa Cruz County Planning Department
701 Ocean Street, Fourth Floor
Santa Cruz, California 95060

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Scoping Meeting

Project Title: Medical Office Building

Project Applicant: PMB Real Estate Services

In implementing its duties under Section 15021 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the County of Santa Cruz Planning Department (as Lead Agency) will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Medical Office Building project (proposed project). In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the County of Santa Cruz Planning Department has prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to provide responsible and trustee agencies with sufficient information about the proposed project and its potential environmental effects.

The County of Santa Cruz has determined that an EIR is the appropriate environmental document to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. The EIR will address all resource and issue areas listed in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, with particular attention to Aesthetics, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Transportation, and Utility and Service Systems.

As specified by the CEQA Guidelines, the NOP will be circulated for a 30-day period, which starts on March 24, 2020, and concludes on April 22, 2020, during which time the County Planning Department welcomes input from responsible and trustee agencies and interested members of the general public. Responses to this NOP should focus on the potentially significant environmental effects the proposed project may have on the physical environment, ways in which those effects might be minimized, and potential alternatives to the proposed project that should be addressed in the EIR. Agencies will need to use the EIR prepared by the County when considering permits or other approvals for the proposed project. If agencies send no response by the end of the review period, the Planning Department may presume that the agencies have no comment to make regarding the scope of the EIR. Comments may be submitted in writing or via email to:

Stephanie Hansen, AICP, Principal Planner
Santa Cruz County Planning Department
701 Ocean Street, Fourth Floor
Santa Cruz, California 95060
stephanie.hansen@santacruzcounty.us

Because of time limits imposed by state law, **all comments related to this NOP must be postmarked or received no later than 5:00 p.m. on April 22, 2020.**

Agencies and interested members of the public are invited to attend a **Public EIR Scoping Meeting** on April 2, 2020, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. This meeting will include a brief overview of the EIR process and allow time for oral comments on the scope of the EIR. Due to public health concerns, the scoping meeting will be a web-based video conference that can be accessed via the following link:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/284683261>

Participation without visuals is also possible via telephone using the following dial-in information:

Phone number: 571-317-3122
Access Code: 284-683-261#

The NOP and proposed project information are available for public review online at the following web address:

<http://www.sccoplanning.com/PlanningHome/Environmental/CEQAInitialStudiesEIRs/CEQADocumentsOpenforPublicReview.aspx>

The proposed project, its location, and potential environmental effects are described on the following pages.



March 24, 2020

Signature

Date

Stephanie Hansen, AICP

Principal Planner

Printed Name

Title

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The County of Santa Cruz does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs, or activities. If you are a person with a disability, specifically a communication disability, and you would like to request a reasonable modification or accommodation to fully participate in the meeting via videoconference or telephone, please contact the Planning Department at (831) 454-3137 or Bernice.shawver@santacruzcounty.us at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting to discuss your accessibility needs. Persons with disabilities may request a copy of the agenda and presentation in an alternative format.

Introduction

The purpose of an EIR is to inform decision makers and the public of the significant environmental effects of a proposed project. The EIR process is intended to provide environmental information sufficient to evaluate a project and its potential for significant effects on the environment; discuss methods of reducing or avoiding adverse environmental impacts; and consider alternatives to the proposed project. Prior to taking any action on the proposed project, the Board of Supervisors must, at a public hearing, certify that the EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, and reflects the independent judgment of the County. Separate notices of the availability of the Draft EIR for public review and comment and of the hearings on the project will be released at later dates.

Project Location

The proposed project site is a single parcel identified as Assessor's Parcel Number 029-021-47 that measures approximately five acres. The site is located on the southern frontage of Soquel Avenue, just south of the State Route (Highway) 1 Freeway in Santa Cruz County. The intersection of Soquel Avenue and Chanticleer Avenue is approximately 730 feet west of the proposed project site. The street address is 5940 Soquel Avenue, Santa Cruz, California 95062. Figure 1 and Figure 2, attached, show the proposed project location.

Project Setting

The proposed project site is zoned RM-2-R (Multi-Family Residential) and has a General Plan designation of R-UH (Urban High-Density Residential); a Planned Unit Development was previously approved for 100 units of housing on the site. The project site is relatively flat with frontage on a segment of Soquel Avenue that parallels Highway 1 in this area of the County. There is a single driveway for ingress/egress. The proposed project site is used primarily for miscellaneous storage and junkyard/salvage purposes. Several vehicle towing business and storage companies list the site as their address. Temporary storage containers are dispersed across much of the site, as are vehicles, boats, and campers which appear either no longer operational or rarely operated. In addition to temporary storage containers, the site contains an office trailer and attached workshop measuring approximately 2300-square feet and three sheds that range from 215 square feet to 1300 square feet on the proposed project site. A coarsely paved road leads to various areas of the proposed project site. The northwestern portion of the proposed project site is also paved with concrete.

As a result of the intensive use of the property for storage, the entire site is urbanized with little native vegetation cover present. However, there are several trees that remain. Additionally, the proposed project would involve a new stormwater outfall at Rodeo Gulch, approximately 1,200 feet east of the site. The proposed outfall area along Rodeo Gulch supports naturalized vegetation cover, including native trees.

A separate parcel adjoins an area of the proposed project site on the north, between the site boundary and Soquel Avenue. This site is developed with a landscape supply business. Light-industrial and commercial development adjoin the site to the east, including a roofing supply operation and a landscape nursery. A single-family manufactured home residential development is adjacent to the south side of the proposed project site. Some residences within this community lay within 10 feet of the property line of the proposed project site. An electrical supply store and an assisted living facility are located to the southwest of the project site. Three buildings of more recent construction and associated surface parking are located to the west of the proposed project site. These buildings include the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, as well as professional offices housing private businesses. The surface parking area and building exteriors are landscaped. Chanticleer Avenue is located to the west of these buildings.

Project Description

The proposed project would be comprised of a new four-story medical office building measuring approximately 60 feet in height to finished roof and approximately 74 feet to top of mechanical screens on the rooftop. The proposed building would provide approximately 160,000 gross square feet of medical office use for specialty outpatient services. Services may include advanced medical and urgent care clinics, and outpatient surgery facilities, support services for urgent care and outpatient surgery including pharmacy, laboratory, imaging facilities, primary care, women's health, pediatric health, optometry, hearing, vision essentials, neurology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, hematology/oncology, infectious diseases, rheumatology, nephrology, pulmonology, sleep lab, orthopedics, podiatry, pain medicine, physical medicine and rehabilitation dermatology, health education, telehealth, café, and administrative office spaces. The facility would be open to the public from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., but urgent care and ancillary functions would operate continuously, without closing. The expected number of on-site staff, at peak, would be approximately 300 to 350 persons.

The proposed project would also include the construction of a four-story parking garage across an internal roadway west of the proposed medical office building. It would accommodate five levels of parking, with 730 new vehicle parking spaces to serve the on-site medical uses. Approximately 47 of the parking spaces can accommodate charging stations for electric vehicles. Bike lockers would also be provided.

The proposed medical office building would be located on the eastern half of the site and would front Soquel Avenue. The proposed parking garage would be located on the western half of the site, set back from Soquel Avenue. A new driveway would be constructed from Soquel Avenue that facilitates circulation between the medical office building and parking garage. The driveway would also include a patient drop-off/pick-up zone outside of the medical office building. A separate driveway for service vehicles would be constructed providing access to the rear of the medical office building. A landscaped outdoor area with an approximately 4-foot-wide pedestrian pathway would be constructed at the far southern end of the site, providing a buffer between the proposed project and the existing residential community to the south. Figure 3, attached, provides a conceptual site plan. All current on-site uses would be removed or demolished from the site prior to grading and project construction.

The proposed project would include street frontage improvements along Soquel Avenue, including new pedestrian sidewalks and bicycle facilities, as well as potential off-site intersection improvements. The proposed project would also require utility and drainage improvements including new eight-inch sanitary sewer, eight-inch fire, and four-inch domestic water lines. PG&E would provide gas and electric service, though the proposed project would also include photovoltaic solar panels on the rooftop level of the parking garage. The proposed project includes off-site sanitary sewer and storm drainage improvements to accommodate the increased demand on infrastructure. A new stormwater outfall would be constructed along Rodeo Gulch, approximately 1,200 feet east of the site on APNs 029-031-11 and 029-031-14.

Potential Approvals and Permits Required

Discretionary approvals required for the proposed project include a General Plan amendment, rezone, and PUD. The General Plan amendment would change the land use designation of the proposed project site from urban high-density residential (R-UH) to Professional and Administrative Office Designation (C-O). The rezone would change the zoning district of the site from Multi-Family Residential (RM-2-R) to Professional-Administrative Office (PA). A Commercial Development Permit, Grading Permit, and Encroachment Permit would also be required by the County of Santa Cruz.

Possible state permits that may be required include a Streambed Alteration Agreement from California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the proposed outfall along Rodeo Gulch. A Regional Water Quality Control Board and federal permits may be required in association with the drainage outfall, as well.

Potential Environmental Effects

The County has determined that an EIR is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed project. Pursuant to CEQA and California Code of Regulations Section 15064, the discussion of potential project effects on the environment in the EIR will provide a discussion of all issue and resource areas listed in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. The areas to be evaluated include the following:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

Some issue areas that are not present in the project area and clearly unaffected by the project will be only briefly discussed, including agriculture and forestry resources, recreation, and tribal cultural resources. The EIR analysis will particularly focus on impacts that the County has determined may be potentially significant. These impacts are related to aesthetics, hazards and hazardous materials, transportation, and public utilities and service systems, including water demand and supply, as summarized below. In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations Section 15126.6), the EIR will describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project capable of meeting most of the project objectives and that would avoid or substantially lessen any potential significant effects identified.

Aesthetics

Highway 1 is designated as a scenic roadway in the County's General Plan in the proposed project area. The proposed project would be visible from Highway 1, and therefore, could impact existing visual character or quality, as seen from the highway and other public vantage points in the area. The proposed project would also include new sources of light and glare, including site and interior illumination, glazing and photovoltaic solar panel arrays. The analysis will evaluate these potential impacts.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The proposed project site is used for the storage of vehicles, boats, campers, scrap concrete, and other miscellaneous and unknown items and materials. Therefore, there is potential that hazardous materials have either intentionally been stored on-site or inadvertently leaked onto the site. The County is conducting a peer review of Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments provided by the project applicant. The EIR analysis will evaluate potential impacts from recognized environmental conditions identified in the Environmental Site Assessments based on past and current uses on-site. The analysis will also address the potential for operation of the project to generate medical wastes, such as disposable nitrile gloves, syringes, and surgeon masks.

Transportation

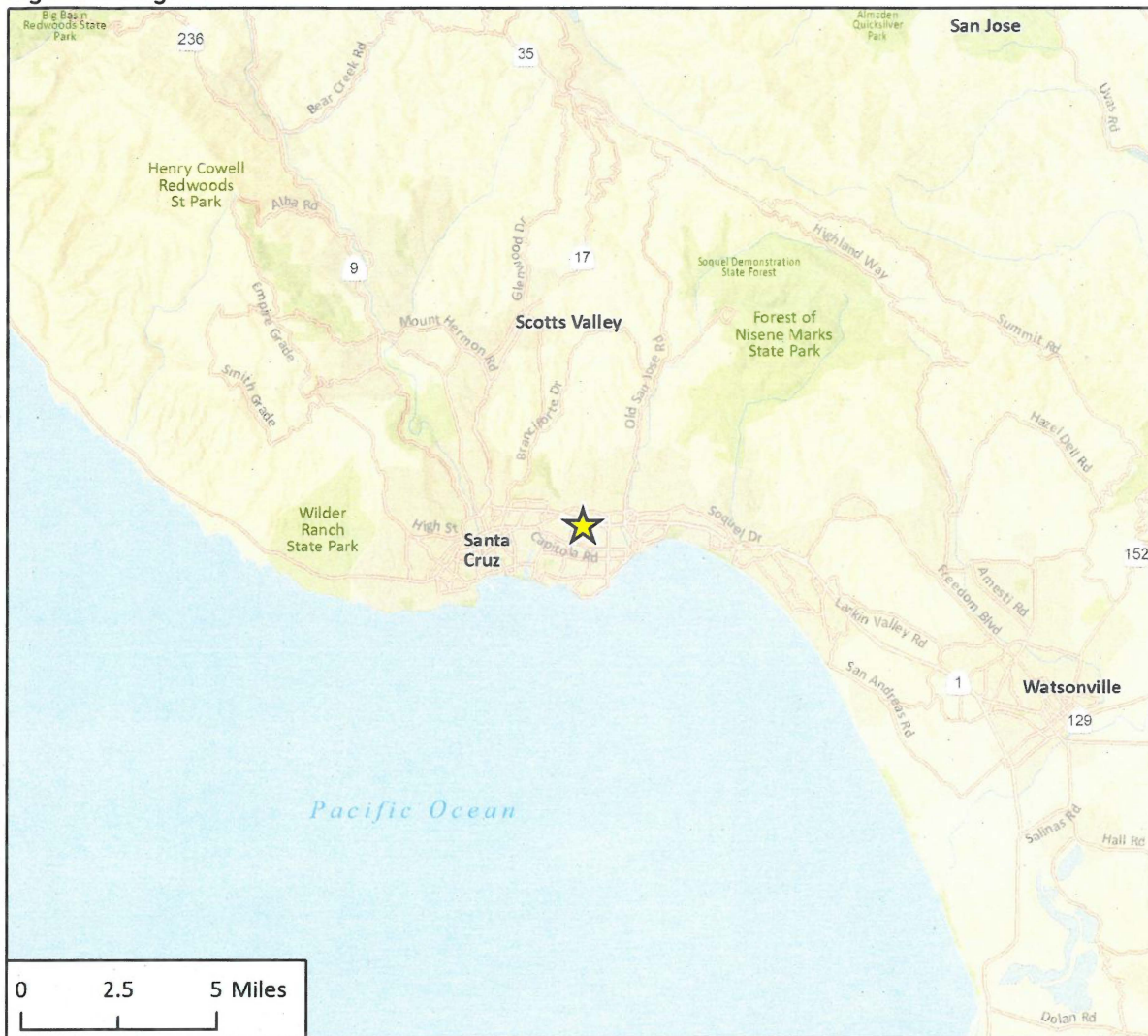
Until recently, transportation impacts were typically evaluated using automobile delay at intersections or along roadway segments, generally measured in terms of level of service (LOS). However, pursuant to Section 15064.3(a) of the 2019 State CEQA Guidelines, a project's effect on automobile delay shall no longer constitute a significant environmental impact. Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is identified in Section 15064.3 as the most appropriate metric to evaluate transportation impacts. Therefore, the EIR analysis will evaluate VMT impacts of the project. This section will also evaluate potential impacts related to pedestrian and bicycle circulation, transit facilities, and emergency access. Although automobile delay is no longer considered a significant environmental impact under CEQA, a discussion of potential LOS deficiencies at study intersections resulting from the addition of proposed project trips will be included in the analysis for informational purposes and General Plan consistency.

Utilities and Service Systems

The proposed medical office building would generate demand for water, wastewater treatment, electricity, and other utilities. The EIR will evaluate the potential for this demand to exceed existing capacity or supply of utilities, such that expansion of existing utility facilities would be required. Water demand generated by operation of the proposed project will be compared to existing water supplies during several hydrologic conditions, including a normal water year, dry water year, and extended multiple dry years. Consistency with the County's sanitary sewer moratorium will be evaluated.

The analysis for all issue and resource areas will include direct and indirect impacts of the proposed project, as well as cumulative impacts. Consistent with Section 15130 of the State CEQA Guidelines, cumulative impacts will be discussed where the incremental impact of the proposed project is cumulatively considerable when combined with other area projects. The EIR will also evaluate the potential for the project to induce growth.

Figure 1 Regional Location



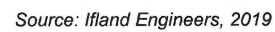
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Figure 2 Project Vicinity



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Attachment 1
**Medical Office Building Project EIR Distribution List
for the Notice of Preparation**

COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

**County of Santa Cruz Department of Public Works
Traffic**

701 Ocean Street, Suite 410
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Attn: Steve Wiesner

**County of Santa Cruz Department of Public Works
Sanitation**

701 Ocean Street, Suite 410
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Attn: Kent Edler

County of Santa Cruz Dept. of Environmental Health

701 Ocean Street,
3rd Floor - Room 312
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Attn: John Ricker

County of Santa Cruz Sheriff's Office

5200 Soquel Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062
Attn: Sergeant Roy Morales

**County of Santa Cruz
Agricultural Commissioner**

175 Westridge Drive
Watsonville, CA 95076
Attn: Juan Hildalgo

**County of Santa Cruz
Commission on Disabilities**

701 Ocean Street, Room 30
Santa Cruz, California 95060

County of Santa Cruz Planning Commission

701 Ocean Street, 4th Floor
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

**County of Santa Cruz Department of Public Works
Storm Water Management**

701 Ocean Street, Suite 410
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Attn: Rachel Fatoohi

**County of Santa Cruz
Mosquito Abatement and Vector Control District**

640 Capitola Road
Santa Cruz, CA 95062
Attn: Paul Binding

County of Santa Cruz, Board of Supervisors

701 Ocean Street, Room 500
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Attn: John Leopold, 1st District Supervisor
Zach Friend, 2nd District Supervisor
Ryan Coonerty, 3rd District Supervisor
Greg Caput, 4th District Supervisor
Bruce McPherson, 5th District Supervisor

**County of Santa Cruz Economic Development
Coordinator**

County Administration Office
701 Ocean St, Room 520
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Attn: Barbara Mason

LAFCO of Santa Cruz County

701 Ocean Street #318D
Santa Cruz CA 95060
Attn: Joe Serrano

**Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation
Commission**

1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Attn: Grace Blakeslee

County of Santa Cruz Clerk of the Board

701 Ocean Street, Room 500
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

City of Santa Cruz

Water Department
212 Locust Street, Suite A
Santa Cruz, California 95060
Attn: Chris Berry

City of Capitola

Community Development Department
420 Capitola Avenue
Capitola, CA 95010
Attn: Katie Herlihy

REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments

PO Box 2453
Seaside, CA 93955

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

Central Fire Protection District

930 17th Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District

110 Vernon Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Attn: Ciro Aguirre

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Porter Memorial Library
3050 Porter Street
Soquel, CA 95073
Attn: Reference Desk

Capitola Branch Library
2005 Wharf Road
Capitola, CA 95010
Attn: Reference Desk

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

California Highway Patrol
Coastal Division
4115 Broad Street, Suite B-10
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

California Department of Transportation
District 5
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-5415
Attn: Jennifer Calate

State of California
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

California Native American Heritage Commission
1550 Harbor Blvd, Suite 100
West Sacramento, CA 95691

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Region 3
895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-7906

Monterey Bay Air Resources District
24580 Silver Cloud Court
Monterey, CA 93940
Attn: Amy Clymo

Office of Historic Preservation
1725 23rd Street, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95816

FEDERAL

None