

# County of Santa Clara

## Facilities and Fleet Department

County Center at Charcot  
2310 North First Street, Suite 200  
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### NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE FORMER SAN JOSE CITY HALL PROJECT

**Project Owner/Proponent:** County of Santa Clara - Facilities and Fleets Department (FAF)  
**Project Title:** Former San Jose City Hall Project  
**Assessor's Parcel Number:** 259-04-023

As the Lead Agency, the County of Santa Clara will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed project referenced above. The County welcomes your input regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR. A brief description of the proposed project, its location, and a summary of the potential environmental effects is attached.

The project proposes demolition of the former San Jose City Hall building (former City Hall). The facility is a five-story, approximately 113,430-square-foot office building, at 801 North First Street in San Jose, on the northwest corner of North First Street and West Mission Street. Approval of the project will require actions by the County of Santa Clara, including approval by the County Board of Supervisors.

A Public Scoping/Community Meeting to solicit comments on the Notice of Preparation will be held on:

**Tuesday, July 7, 2020 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.**

The meeting will be held virtually. The meeting link and instructions for joining the virtual meeting are available on the project website at <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/faf/capital-projects/Pages/fmr-city-hall.aspx>.

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), comments on this Notice of Preparation are due within 30 days of its receipt. However, an earlier response, if possible, would be appreciated. Please send your response to:

County of Santa Clara Facilities and Fleets Department

**Attention: Emily Chen**

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**Approved by:**

David Barry, Chief of Facilities Planning Services

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Emily Chen

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David Barry

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Signature

6/22/2020

Date

6/22/2020

Date

**Board of Supervisors:** Mike Wasserman, Cindy Chavez, Dave Cortese, Susan Ellenberg, S. Joseph Simitian  
**County Executive:** Jeffrey V. Smith

## Project Location

The former San Jose City Hall is at 801 North First Street, approximately 1.5 miles north of downtown San Jose, on the northwest corner of North First and West Mission Streets (Figure 1). The building is located in the southeastern portion of an approximately 9.8-acre parcel, just south of the existing County Government Center, and within “Site D” of the County’s Civic Center Master Plan. The project site is limited to that portion of the parcel that would be required to enable demolition of the former City Hall Building (Figure 2), including the curved driveway and associated surface parking area to the south of the building and the surface parking area formerly occupied by the City Hall Annex building (demolished in 2018) to the north of the building, which may be used as staging areas for the project. The western portion of the parcel, outside of the project site, contains the County’s Reentry Resource Center and a surface parking lot, while the northeastern portion contains a public grassed plaza area with mature trees.

## Project Description

The proposed project involves the demolition of the former San José City Hall, a five-story, 113,430-square-foot office building. The building is currently vacant and is not in a usable condition, with ongoing maintenance and security costs borne by the County.

Demolition activities would include the following:

- Preparation of the building, including stabilization or abatement of hazardous building materials and disconnection of utilities;
- Demolition of the building, using implosion (placing explosive materials so that the structure collapses on itself) and/or traditional demolition methods;
- Sorting and disposal of demolition debris; and
- Regrading, filling and hydroseeding of the site.

No future use has been identified or proposed for the site following demolition of the building. However, impacts of reasonably foreseeable potential future uses will be considered as part of the EIR’s growth-inducing and/or cumulative impact analyses.

## Potential Environmental Effects of the Project

The EIR will identify the significant environmental effects anticipated to result from implementation of the proposed project. As allowed by CEQA Guidelines §15063(a), an Initial Study has not been prepared for the Proposed Project because an EIR will clearly be required. Due to the location of the project site in an urban area that is not within or close to any farmlands or forestry resources, known mineral deposits, or wildfire hazard areas, these environmental topics will not be addressed in detail in the EIR. The EIR will evaluate all other environmental issues contemplated for consideration under CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, including:

- |                                   |                                 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Aesthetics                      | • Land Use and Planning         |
| • Air Quality                     | • Noise and Vibration           |
| • Biological Resources            | • Recreational Resources        |
| • Cultural Resources              | • Population and Housing        |
| • Energy                          | • Public Services               |
| • Geology and Soils               | • Transportation                |
| • Greenhouse Gas Emissions        | • Utilities and Service Systems |
| • Hazards and Hazardous Materials | • Tribal Cultural Resources     |
| • Hydrology and Water Quality     |                                 |

It is anticipated that the primary focus of analysis will be on the specific environmental topics outlined below. Mitigation measures will be identified to reduce or avoid significant impacts, as appropriate.

### **Aesthetics**

The project site currently contains the five-story former City Hall building and associated surface parking and landscaping. The proposed project calls for the County to demolish this building, and fill and regrade the site. The EIR will describe the existing zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality and assess whether the project would conflict with such regulations. Light and glare impacts will also be evaluated.

### **Air Quality**

The EIR will address the regional air quality conditions in the Bay Area and discuss the proposed project's impacts to local and regional air quality according to the 2017 Bay Area Air Quality Management District guidelines and thresholds, focusing on temporary demolition-related impacts such as construction vehicle exhaust and dust.

### **Biological Resources**

The EIR will describe existing biological resources in the project vicinity and address any biological resource effects associated with the project, including impacts to habitats and special-status species, including nesting birds.

### **Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources**

The former San Jose City Hall is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, as well as the California Register of Historical Places. As a result, the EIR will discuss the effects of the loss of a historic resource. The EIR will also discuss the potential for prehistoric and Native American cultural resources to be located in the project area.

### **Energy**

The EIR will examine the potential for the project to result in excessive or inefficient use of energy and will discuss any energy conservation measures included as part of the project.

### **Geology & Soils**

The project site is located within a seismically active region. The EIR will discuss possible geological impacts associated with seismic activity and the existing soil conditions on-site, as well as potential impacts to paleontological resources.

### **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

The EIR will describe the regulatory context surrounding the issue of global climate change and will evaluate the project's greenhouse gas emissions and contribution to global climate change, in conformance with the methodology of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and any other applicable criteria.

### **Hazards & Hazardous Materials**

The EIR will summarize hazardous materials conditions on and adjacent to the project site and identify any potential contamination that could affect construction workers and/or nearby receptors, such as residences, schools, daycare facilities, and open space/recreational areas.

### **Hydrology & Water Quality**

The EIR will describe the existing hydrologic and drainage conditions at the project site, as well as changes in site drainage and hydrological conditions that may result from the proposed project. The EIR will address the possible impacts of the project on stormwater, surface water, and groundwater quality.

### **Land Use and Planning**

The project site is located in an urban area within the boundaries of the County's Civic Center. The EIR will describe the existing land uses on and adjacent to the project site. Cumulative land use impacts that would occur as a result of the proposed project would be analyzed, including impacts due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

### **Noise and Vibration**

The EIR will describe existing noise conditions in the project area and evaluate the potential for noise and vibration generated by the project to exceed applicable noise standards and adversely affect sensitive receptors in the area.

### **Population and Housing**

The EIR will assess whether the project would induce cumulative unplanned population growth in the area or displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing.

### **Public Services and Recreational Resources**

The EIR will discuss the availability of public facilities and service systems (including police and fire services, parks, schools, and libraries) and recreational resources in the project area, and the potential for the project and related projects to cumulatively require the construction of new or expanded facilities.

### **Transportation**

The EIR will describe the existing transportation network and analyze the impacts of the project, including whether the project would conflict with applicable transportation planning policies, result in a substantial increase in vehicle miles travelled, create a traffic safety hazard, or impact emergency access.

### **Utilities and Service Systems**

The EIR will describe the existing utilities, including potable water supply utilities, serving the project area. The EIR will evaluate the proposed project's effects on these utilities.

### **Alternatives**

The EIR will identify and evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives to the project that would feasibly attain most of the project's basic objectives, but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the project's significant effects. As required by CEQA, the EIR will also analyze a "No Project" alternative (i.e., to retain the former City Hall in its current unused state). Other alternatives that seek to reduce the significant environmental impacts of the project will be identified, which may include adaptive re-use of the former City Hall building either as residential or office space. Alternatives discussed will be chosen based on their ability to reduce or avoid identified significant impacts of the project while achieving most of the identified objectives of the project (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6).

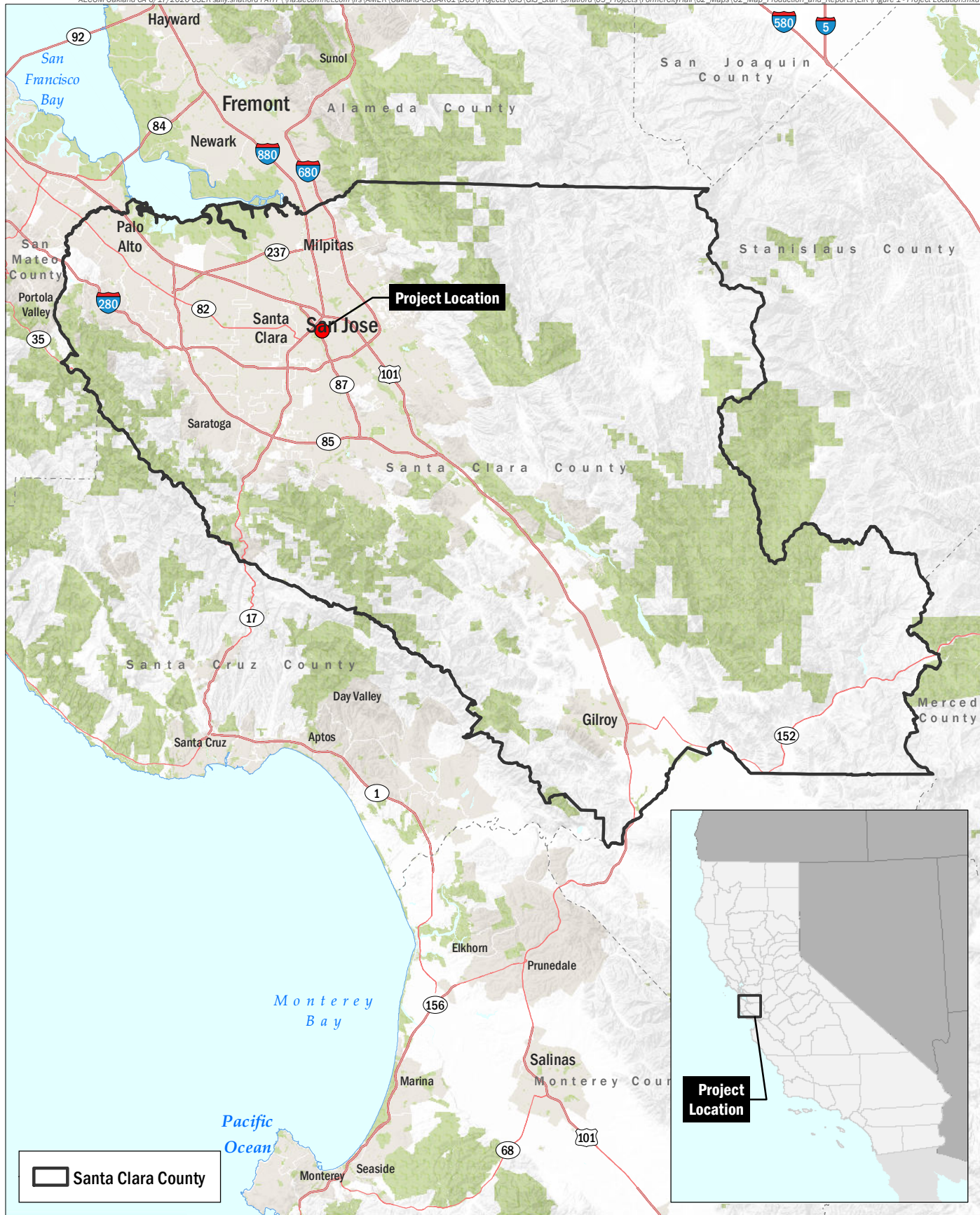
The EIR will identify the degree to which each alternative might avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the project's significant environmental impacts, whether the alternative could result in other or increased impacts, and the degree to which the alternative would feasibly accomplish most of the project's basic objectives. In accordance with CEQA, the EIR will identify an environmentally superior alternative, based on the number and degree of associated environmental impacts.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

The EIR will include a discussion of significant cumulative impacts of the project when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the area. This section will cover all relevant subject areas discussed in the EIR (e.g., air quality, noise, traffic), will specify which of the areas are anticipated to experience significant cumulative impacts, and will determine whether the proposed project's incremental contributions are cumulatively considerable. Mitigation measures will be identified to reduce or avoid the project's cumulatively considerable contribution to significant cumulative impacts.

### **Growth Inducing Impacts**

The EIR will qualitatively evaluate the project's potential to induce growth and any subsequent environmental impacts that would occur pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126(d).



Source: AECOM, 2020; CPAD, 2019; ESRI, 2016 (roads)



