Project Description

This section describes the proposed project, including the project applicant, the subject property, the project site and surrounding land uses, major project characteristics, project objectives, and discretionary actions needed for approval.

Project Applicant

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Project Location

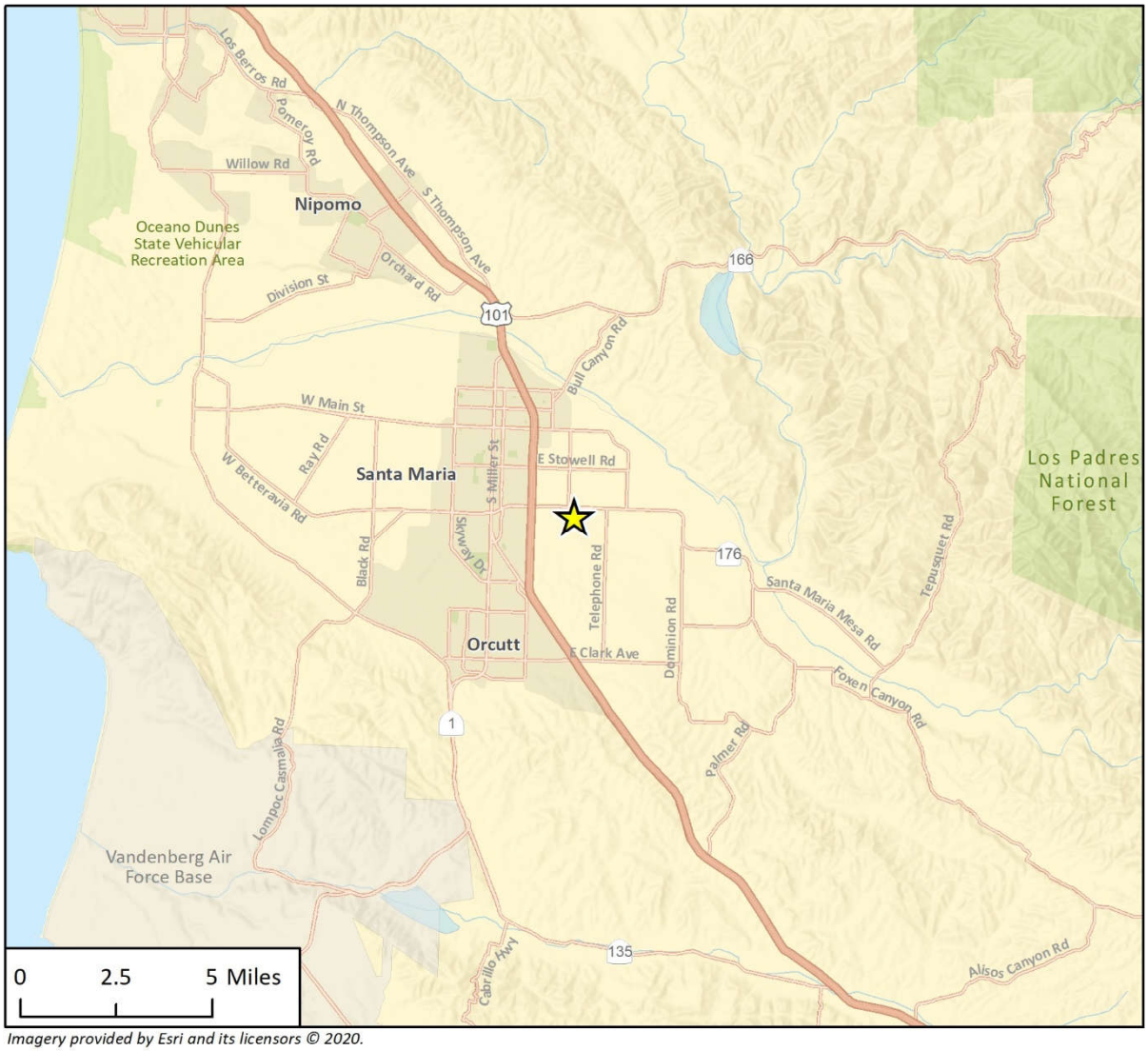
The subject property is located at 1750 East Betteravia Road approximately one mile east of the City of Santa Maria in northern Santa Barbara County. The property is located on the east side of Rosemary Road, approximately 1.1 miles east of U.S. Highway 101 (U.S. 101) and is comprised of two parcels (Assessor Parcel Numbers [APN] 128-097-001 and 128-097-002), totaling approximately 109 acres. The property is bound by Rosemary Road on the west, East Betteravia Road on the north, and Prell Road on the south. Active agricultural operations surround the property in all directions. The planned limits of ground disturbance for the proposed new processor and freezer facilities ("project site") cover approximately 40 acres on the northeast portion of the site. Figure 1 shows the regional location of the project site, while Figure 2 shows the project site and subject property in the local context.

Existing Site Characteristics

Current Land Use and Zoning

The subject property is currently used for agricultural purposes with a mix of row crops, livestock grazing, and an existing vegetable cooling plant (Mid Coast Cooling, Inc.). The existing vegetable cooling plant is located on the southwest portion on the property and would not be removed or modified as part of the proposed project. The property is zoned AG-II (Agricultural II) with a corresponding zoning map symbol of AG-II-40.

Figure 1 Regional Project Location



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Project Location

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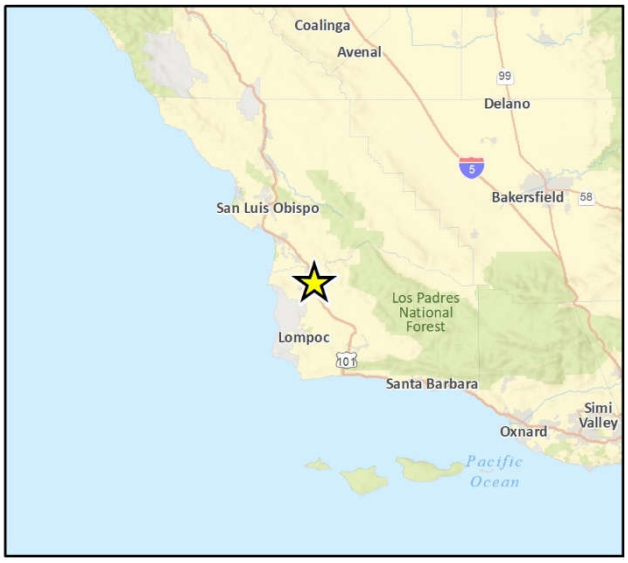

Figure 2 Project Site Boundary and Disturbance Area

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As described in the Santa Barbara County Land Use & Development Code (LUDC), the AG-II zone is applied to areas appropriate for agricultural land uses on prime and non-prime agricultural lands located within the Rural Area, as shown on the County's Comprehensive Plan maps, with the intention of preserving these lands for long-term agricultural use. The AG-II-40 zone expands upon the underlying AG-II zoning to specify that the minimum gross lot area/building site area for development of the property is 40 acres (LUDC Section 35.21.040, County of Santa Barbara 2020).

Surrounding Land Uses and Zoning

The subject property is surrounded in all directions by agricultural uses, including Central City Cooling and row crops located across Betteravia Road to the north and row crops to the east, south, and west. The properties to the north, south, and east are zoned AG-II-40. The property to the west is zoned AG-II-100.

Project Characteristics

The proposed project involves a Conditional Use Permit and Development Plan to allow development of a 449,248 square-foot (sf) gross floor area agricultural processor and freezer facility on a 40-acre project site located in the northeastern portion of the subject property. Other components of the project include dry storage/warehousing space, administrative offices, shipping and receiving docks, maintenance and mechanical areas, trash and recycling areas, and parking.

Proposed Site Plan

Figure 3 shows the proposed site plan for the project and Figure 4 shows distant and close-up visual renderings of the project from U.S. 101 and East Betteravia Road. Table 1 provides the proposed project characteristics, including the building area for each the primary components of the proposed processor and freezer facilities.

Facilities Operations

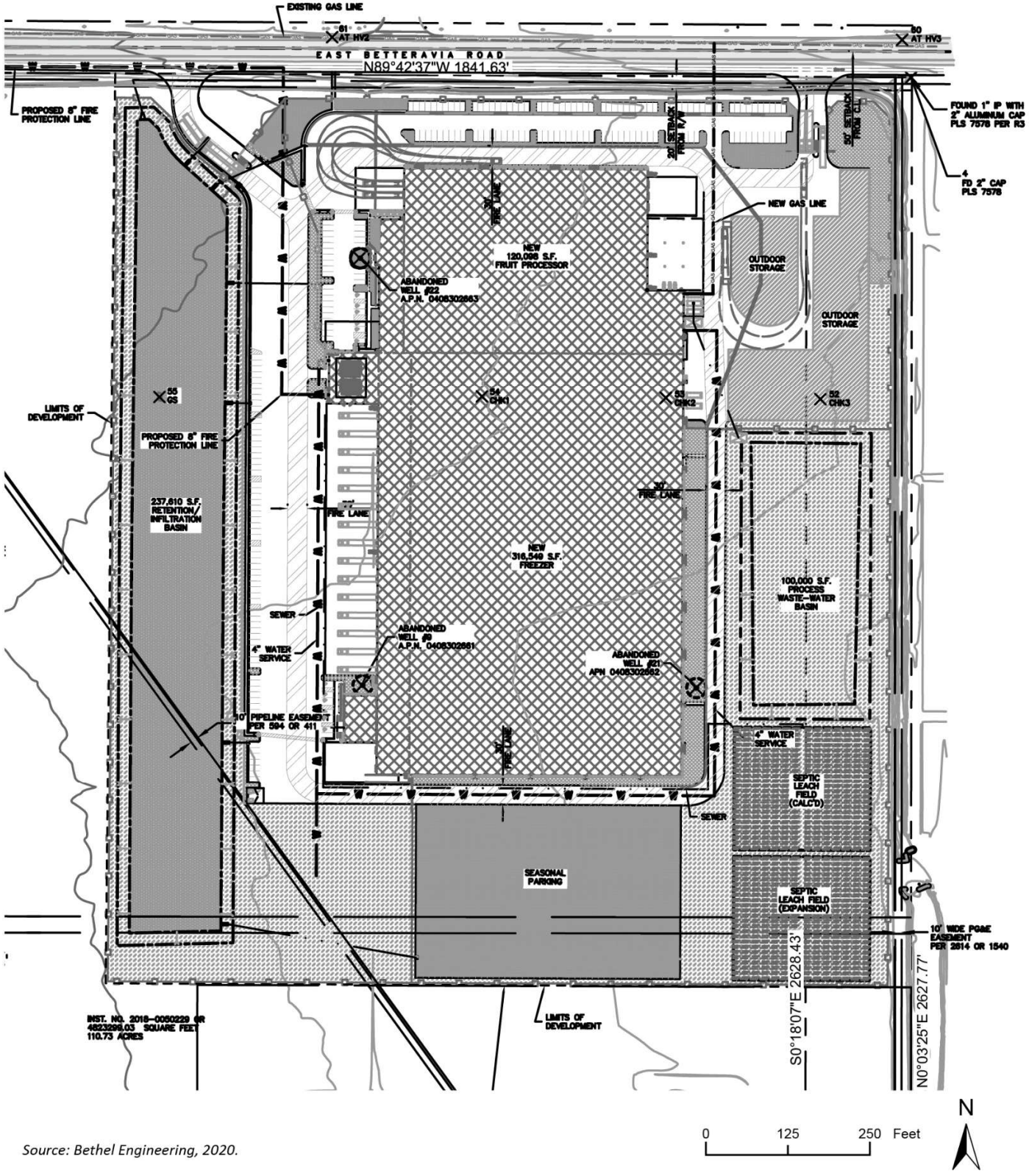
The processor facility would receive produce from local growers as well as from other regions throughout California and Baja California, Mexico for processing. Processing includes slicing, dicing, freezing, adding sugar and other ingredients, and making purees and puree concentrates pursuant to client requirements. Once processed, the finished product would be packaged and conveyed to cold storage for blast freezing and storage.

The freezer facility would specialize as a cold distribution warehouse. Product would be received and entered into a computerized warehouse management system (WMS), which would determine whether the product would be placed in cold room storage or blast freezers. Product would be stored in cold rooms until it is shipped out to regions throughout the United States.

Circulation

Access to and from the project site would be from East Betteravia Road. The proposed operations would involve the use of various types of field trucks, semi-trucks, and large vans. Truck traffic would primarily occur during the processing harvest season from May through September. Trucks would deliver the crops to the facility from local fields to be processed by the tenant processor (fruit) and to the freezer facility (other crops). Outbound trucks would deliver frozen produce to area and regional markets as well as throughout the nation and to international shipping facilities. This transport is not dependent on harvest seasons and would consist of regularly scheduled deliveries of up to 30 trucks

Figure 3 Project Site Plan



Source: Bethel Engineering, 2020.

Figure 4 Visual Renderings of the Proposed Project

Conceptual View 1. Conceptual view of proposed project from U.S. 101, facing east.

Conceptual View 2. Conceptual view of proposed project from East Betteravia Road, facing southeast.

inbound/outbound per day, or 60 average daily trips (ADT), throughout the entire year for freezer operation. Vans used by the processors would deliver processed fruits to area markets by demand. Processor operations would require an average of 10 inbound/outbound vans (20 ADT) and 10 inbound/outbound field trucks (20 ADT) per day, or a total of 40 ADT, during the non-harvest season. During harvest season, processor operations would require an average of 24 inbound/outbound vans (48 ADT) and 52 inbound/outbound field trucks (104 ADT) per day, or a total of 152 ADT.

Truck circulation patterns will be included in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project. On-site truck loading times would typically be limited to between 6:00 AM and 10:30 PM Monday through Friday. Truck staging would occur entirely on-site.

Table 1 Project Characteristics

Address	1750 East Betteravia Road
APNs	128-097-001 (99.0 acres) and 128-097-002 (9.8 acres)
Height/Stories *Processor* *Freezer*	 41.1 feet from existing grade[1]/45.2 feet from finish grade[2] 53.3 feet from existing grade[1]/57.4 feet from finish grade[2]
Lot Area	108.8 acres (subject property) 40.0 acres (project site)
Structural Gross Floor Area (including 1st and 2nd floors) for Processor	
Processing	76,371 sf
Cooler	10,500 sf
Dry Storage/Warehousing	19,708 sf
Administrative	15,410 sf
Maintenance	5,557 sf
Canopy	10,859 sf (Not Included in Total)
Processor Subtotal	127,546 sf
Structural Gross Floor Area (including 1st and 2nd floors) for Freezer	
Freezer	263,716 sf
Dock	32,784 sf
Blast Freezer	10,276 sf
Administrative	7,222 sf
Mechanical	7,704 sf
Freezer Subtotal	321,702 sf
Total Processer and Freezer Operational Gross Floor Area	449,248 sf

sf = square feet

1 300 ft above mean sea level (msl)

2 Approximately 4 ft 2 in below existing grade, or 295 ft 10 in above msl. Totals may not sum exactly due to rounding.

Employees

The processor and freezer facilities would each have two shifts for hours of operation, as follows:

- Freezer: 6:00 AM to 2:00 PM, and 2:30 PM to 10:30 PM
- Processor: 6:00 AM to 4:00 PM, and 5:30 PM to 3:00 AM

A sanitation crew would be on-site from 2:00 AM to 5:00 AM, with administrative personnel operating at various different schedules throughout the year and days. During the non-harvest season (August to May), the project would require approximately 153 employees. During the harvest season (May to August) the project would require approximately 623 employees.

Parking

Based on County parking requirements, the various components of the project would result in a total required parking provision of 569 parking spaces. The project would provide 223 permanent parking spaces and 365 permanent/seasonal parking spaces, for a total of 588 parking spaces. The project would also provide 12 handicap parking spaces.

Landscaping

The project would include approximately 16 acres (699,000 sf) of landscaping, primarily along the eastern and western perimeters, in the stormwater retention areas and basins, and in the parking areas. Irrigated landscaping (i.e., shrubs, trees, turf) would comprise approximately 1.8 acres and non-irrigated landscaping (i.e., open area, basins) would comprise approximately 14.3 acres of the site.

Grading/Drainage

Development of the project would require approximately 64,876 cubic yards (cy) of soil cut and 50,311 cy of soil fill, balancing out to approximately 14,565 cy net soil cut. Due to the generally flat topography of the project site (average slope of less than two percent), a maximum two-foot fill slope is needed to construct the proposed storm water and process water retention infrastructure.

The project would add approximately 19.7 acres of impervious surface, in the form of paving and structural development, to the project site.

Equipment

Most of the equipment used in the processor would be electric driven, except for the following equipment: four 100 horsepower (hp) Miura Low NO_X Boilers; one 300 hp Miura low NO_X boiler; and four propane forklifts. All equipment associated with the freezer operation would be electric. A more detailed discussion of these project components will be included in the EIR for the project.

The preliminary refrigeration system design would be an industrial ammonia system estimated at 1,800 tons to serve freezers, blast freezing cells, freezer storage, cooler rooms, and shipping docks for the proposed facilities. The refrigeration system is estimated to have a total of 7,500 hp at 480 volts (V) using about 31,374,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per year.

The machinery room would house 12 compressors, one recirculatory package, and five ammonia pressure vessels.

Water Use

Water is currently used for existing agricultural production of approximately 90 acres of row crops, including strawberries and broccoli, on the project site. Using a conservative general value of 1.5 acre-

feet per year (AFY) of water used per day for broccoli (University of California Davis 2017) existing water use for onsite irrigation is estimated to be 163.5 acre-feet per year (AFY). The project would result in the removal of approximately 40 acres of crop production from the subject property. Accordingly, the project would reduce water demand for irrigation by approximately 60 AFY.

Based upon metered volumes from another similar facility for the same company that would operate the project, the proposed new freezer and processor would result in an anticipated maximum water demand of approximately 72.0 AFY and 200.6 AFY, respectively. The domestic (potable) and landscaping components of the project would result in an additional water demand of approximately 4.9 AFY. Overall, the project result in an anticipated maximum water demand of approximately 277.5 acre-feet per year. The net incremental increase of water onsite from existing to proposed conditions would be approximately 158.5 acre-feet per year. There is an existing well that is used for irrigation purposes on the project site. However, the existing well does not have the necessary sanitary seal to be used for potable water. The project would include installation of a new well to service the project site.

The project would include installation of an 8-inch water line for fire protection purposes that would run along East Betteravia Road and connect to the existing City of Santa Maria 24-inch water main in Rosemary Road to provide water for emergency purposes, including fires, on the project site. The applicant would be required to contract with the City through an outside user's agreement to provide the necessary flows onsite to meet Santa Barbara County Fire Department standards.

Wastewater

Wastewater generation rates from the project would vary substantially throughout the year, with peak volumes generated during the harvest season. All wastewater generated from the processor would be treated in accordance with State of California water quality standards and would be discharged into a 100,000 sf process wastewater basin on the eastern portion of the project site (refer to Figure 3). The wastewater basin would be designed to infiltrate the water within 24 hours so all wastewater minus what evaporates in the 24-hour period percolates through the soil profile back to the groundwater basin. The processor is anticipated to generate approximately 200.6 acre-feet per year of wastewater, equivalent to the water demand for this component of the project.

Residual loss of water would occur as a result of freezer condensation and evaporation on the coils as well as consumption and disposal of potable water to a proposed domestic septic system on the southeastern portion of the development area (refer to Figure 3). Based on the performance of at other locations where similar units have been installed, approximately two-thirds of the anticipated water demand of 72 AFY would be lost through evaporation; therefore, the freezer is anticipated to generate approximately 24 acre-feet per year of wastewater.

Project Objectives

The primary objectives for the project are as follows:

- To develop the site with a use that preserves the agricultural heritage and productivity of the property consistent with the goals of the County of Santa Barbara Agricultural Element;
- To assist area agricultural producers in expanding agricultural production by providing support infrastructure that maximizes of capacity of existing acreage under production;
- To provide infrastructure that assists area growers to access additional and diverse markets through the region, nation, and internationally; and

- To provide increased occupational opportunities in the agricultural community.

Required Approvals

Implementation of the project would require the following discretionary approvals from the County of Santa Barbara:

- **Development Plan** due to scale of project (no by right construction for this use): LUDC 35.82.030.C.2.b.1 requires a development plan for Agricultural Structural Development if the proposed project is greater than 15,000 sf;
- **Conditional Use Permit** due to proposed use: off-premise product-producing facilities (Table 2-1: LUDC 35.21.030);
- **Voluntary Merger** to merge APN parcel numbers 128-097-001 and 128-097-002;
- Petroleum Division and CalGEM on proposed **re-abandonment plans** (under the most current abandonment standards) for the three wells (Vincent 9, 21, and 22) within the project footprint;
- LUDC Section 34A-4(b) requires that an application for a **well construction permit** shall include a plot plan indicating the location of the well with respect to existing wells on the property; and
- Although a **Solid Waste Management Plan** (SWMP) would not be required until building permits are sought, the Standards for Agricultural Processing Facilities in LUDC Section 35.42.040.B.1.b(3) specify that all process water and waste material from milling shall be managed onsite as recycled irrigation water or organic compost.

In addition, the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) would be a responsible agency for review of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requests. The County Flood Control District would be a responsible agency for review of a proposed detention basin system. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) would be a responsible agency for administering the California Endangered Species Act and would authorize “take” of state listed species by reviewing application for and issuance of an Incidental Take Permit subject to Sections 2081(b) and 2081(c) of the California Fish and Game Code. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) would be a responsible agency for implementing the Federal Endangered Species Act and would authorize incidental “take” of federally listed species through Section 7 or Section 10 of the federal Endangered Species Act.