



Memorandum

To: Nimisha Agrawal, Senior Planner
City of Santa Clara

From: Michael Lisenbee, Senior Project Manager
David J. Powers & Associates, Inc.

Date: January 11, 2024

Subject: **2805 Bowers Avenue – Review of Final EIR Prepared by the California Energy Commission**

Background

In November 2023, the California Energy Commission (CEC) certified the Bowers Backup Generating Facility Final EIR for the proposed data center project located at 2805 Bowers Avenue in Santa Clara. The Final EIR determined that, with the incorporation of mitigation measures, the project would not result in significant unavoidable environmental impacts. The Final EIR, however, incorrectly listed the square footage of the existing building on the project site, which would be demolished as part of the proposed project, as 55,000 instead of 100,487.

Review of Final EIR

To ensure the discrepancy in square footage provided for the existing building did not affect the conclusions in the Final EIR, David J. Powers & Associates completed a review of the analysis supporting the Final EIR's conclusions. The review determined that, although the square footage of the existing building is mentioned throughout the Final EIR, it was primarily provided for informational purposes to describe the existing setting on the project site, not as the basis for the analysis of environmental impacts resulting from the proposed project.

In one instance, the Final EIR indicates that a square footage of 55,000 was used to calculate "Area Source" greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the proposed project (Table 4.8-4).¹ However, this was determined to be a typo. Table 4.8-4 lists the GHG emissions from operation of the proposed data center facility, not the existing building on the site. A review of the underlying GHG emissions modeling which Table 4.8-4 is based upon confirmed that the correct square footage of the proposed data center facility (244,068) was used to calculate the GHG emissions resulting from the project.²

¹ California Energy Commission. Bowers Backup Generating Facility Final EIR (page 4.8-23). November 2023. Available at: <https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=22-SPPE-01>.

² California Energy Commission. BBGF SPPE App Appendix A (pages 13 and 21). August 2022. Available at: <https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=22-SPPE-01>.

Additionally, the underlying assumptions for the calculation of air quality and GHG emissions related to demolition activities were reviewed to determine whether the listing of the incorrect square footage of the existing building may have affected emissions estimates. The review determined that the modeling of emissions related to demolition activities was based on detailed assumptions regarding the anticipated duration of demolition activities and specific equipment use anticipated by the project applicant, not model defaults based on the existing building's square footage.³ The assumptions for truck trips associated with hauling away demolition materials, however, were based on model defaults for a 55,000 square foot building. Changing the model defaults to assume a 100,487 square foot building raised overall construction-related haul trips to 2,672 from 2,465, an increase of 8.4 percent.⁴ Emissions associated with demolition haul trips represent well below one percent of overall construction emissions.⁵ As shown in Tables 4.3-5, 4.3-7, 4.3-9, 4.3-11, 4.3-12, and 4.3-13 of the Final EIR, construction emissions were determined to be well below relevant thresholds. A slight increase in demolition hauling emissions which, as stated previously, represent well below one percent of overall construction emissions, would not meaningfully increase overall construction emissions. As a result, the discrepancy in square footage used for assumptions related to hauling of demolition materials did not meaningfully affect the conclusions of the Final EIR.

Conclusion

Although the CEC's Final EIR included an incorrect square footage for the existing building on the project site, the incorrect square footage did not meaningfully affect the analysis of the project's environmental impacts. As a result, the conclusions in the Final EIR remain valid, and no revisions or amendments to the Final EIR are necessary.

³ California Energy Commission. BBGF SPPE App Appendix A (page 14). August 2022. Available at: <https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=22-SPPE-01>.

⁴ CalEEMod default assumptions for demolition hauling trips based on square footage of the demolished structure.

⁵ California Energy Commission. BBGF SPPE App Appendix A (pages 18 and 24). August 2022. Available at: <https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=22-SPPE-01>.