Biological Survey Report for Peaker Construction at Center Substation in Norwalk, CA

Prepared by:
Southern California Edison
Natural & Cultural Resource Group
G.O. 1, Quad 3A
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue
Rosemead, CA 91770
Contact: Adelina O. Muñoz

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Introduction

A biological site assessment was conducted for the Center Substation Peaker Project on September 20 and November 30, 2006. The substation is located near Firestone Blvd. adjacent to Interstate 605 and the San Gabriel River in the city of Norwalk in Los Angeles County (Figure 1: Project Location). Southern California Edison (SCE) is proposing to construct a "peaker" in the northeast corner of the substation. The California Public Utility Commission (CPUC) directed SCE to address future electric reliability needs. This peaker will provide necessary grid support during times of prolonged high electricity demand. The purpose of the survey was to determine whether the proposed activities have the potential to affect sensitive biological resources.

Project Description

SCE plans to build a peaker (a new small electricity generating unit) within the Center substation, which is presently designated as a headquarters site for a line crew contractor. The proposed site for the peaker is surrounded by two gasoline service stations, a miniature golf recreational facility and a commercial nursery (Figure 2: Quad map). The Center peaker project location contains parking areas for various vehicles, construction equipment, and temporary buildings.

The project is proposed to be located within the northeast corner of the existing Center substation site. Project facilities will be located within an approximate 220 by 320 foot area, as depicted on Figure 3. A gas metering station of 40 feet by 75 feet in size will also be constructed in a location within SCE property yet to be determined. The main project facilities will include the GE gas turbine generator, 80-foot tall exhaust stack, continuous emission monitoring system, selective catalytic reduction and an oxidation catalyst system enclosure, ammonia storage tank, gas fuel line, water line, water storage tanks, transmission transformers, 66 kV transmission tap line, and facility control module. A soundwall will be constructed north and east of the project site. Access to the project site will be via a new gate and access road to be constructed on the eastern side of the property from Dumont Ave. A number of ornamental Eucalyptus trees may need to be removed during construction activities. All site facilities are depicted on Figure 4.

Survey Methods and Limitations

The study area boundaries included surveying the northeast corner of the substation and a vacant lot on the eastern boundary. Biological surveys for the areas within the substation property were conducted within areas accessible by foot to identify vegetation types within the project site and to determine the potential impacts to sensitive biological resources. A visual assessment was conducted from Dumont Ave. for the vacant lot. Surveys to evaluate biological resources were conducted by Adelina Munoz, SCE Biologist, on September 20 and November 30, 2006.

Environmental Setting

The findings of this biological site assessment are based on two field surveys for the project study areas on September 20 and November 30, a review of aerial photographs, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps (for Whittier USGS quad), California Native Plant Society's Electronic Inventory (CNPS) and the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB)

Description of the Existing Biological and Physical Conditions

The proposed site for the peaker contains no native vegetation. The ground is constantly disturbed by human activies with daily movement of equipment and vehicles (Figure 3). The project area is open and relatively flat with little or no vegetation (Figure 4). Soil is covered with gravel in most areas. Mature ornamental trees line the project site on the eastern boundary along the fence line (Figures 6 through 12). The primary hydrological resource identified within the general vicinity of the of the substation is the San Gabriel River, which is approximately 600 feet from the project site. The San Gabriel River is jurisdictional waters of the United States. The substation and access to the substation are not expected to impact the San Gabriel River, therefore, this project will not require U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Game, and Regional Water Quality Control Board permits or other related biological resources or wetland permits.

The proposed site for the access road contains ruderal (weedy) vegetation which is routinely mowed (Figures 13 and 14). The area is open with various non native grasses and forbs (herbs). The soil contains numerous small mammal burrows.

Vegetation and Wildlife

Plant communities within the project areas are composed of non-native ornamental tree and shrub species within the substation and ruderal vegetation within the adjacent lot. Dominant species include, E*ucalyptus* sp., carob tree (*Ceratonia siliqua*) and *Myoporum* sp. Wildlife species observed or detected during the survey include western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), common raven (*Corvus corax*), Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), California towhee (*Pipilo crissalis*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), rock dove (*Columba livia*), northern mocking bird (*Mimus polyglottos*), and black phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*). Small burrows potentially suitable for gophers (*Thomomys bottae*) or ground squirrels (*Spermophilus beechyi*) were observed in undisturbed areas next to the fence. Several wildlife tracks (possible canine) were observed along the north boundary of the property.

Biological Resources, Discussion of Impacts and Mitigation

Sensitive Species Potentially in the Project Area

Table 1: Project Study Area Sensitive Species Table

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	Specific Habitat Present/ Absent	Species Presence/ Absence	Rationale
Navarretia prostrata	Prostrate navarretia	SSC CNPS 1B	Alkaline soils in grassland or vernal pools.	A	Project site does not contain native habitat to support this species.
Orcuttia californica	California orcutt grass	FE,ST	Vernal pools	A	Center Substation does not contain any of the required habitats for this species.
Lasthemia glabrata ssp. *coulteri*	Coulter's goldfields	SSC CNPS 1B	Alkaline soils in playas, sinks, and grasslands	A	Center Substation does not contain any of the required habitats for this species.
Phacelia stellaris	Brand's phacelia	FC	Open areas of coastal scrub and coastal dunes	A	Center Substation does not contain any of the required habitats for this species.

Absent [A] means no further work needed. Present [P] means general habitat is present and species may be present. Status: Federal Endangered (FE); Federal Threatened (FT); Federal Proposed (FP, FPE, FPT); Federal Candidate (FC), Federal Species of Concern (FSC); State Endangered (SE); State Threatened (ST); Fully Protected (FP); State Rare (SR); State Species of Special Concern (SSC); California Native Plant Society (CNPS), 1B-rare, threatened or

endangered in California and elsewhere; CNPS 2-species is rare, threatened or endangered in California but more common elsewhere.

Survey Results

The regional sensitive species were identified using the CNDDB (2006) for the Whittier quadrangle (Table 1). None of the species identified in Table 1 is expected to be found within the proposed project area. The habitat necessary for these species is not present; therefore, there is no potential for sensitive species within the project area. Sensitive plant and wildlife species will not be impacted by project construction activies.

Permits and Technical Studies for Special Laws or Conditions

Construction activities associated with the Center peaker project would not result in impacts to Federal and State waterways, Federal and State endangered species or wetlands; therefore, regulatory permits for biological resources and/or wetlands will not be required by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Game, Regional Water Quality Control Board for this project.

Project Impacts

Project impacts including staging and gas line will be limited to existing roads and currently disturbed portions of the substation. New access will be constructed along the eastern boundary of the property. Noise impacts could have an indirect impact on local wildlife populations, though this should be not be a significant impact considering the constant ambient noise of the area (nearby Interstate 605). Direct impacts to nesting birds and wildlife due to possible trimming or removal of trees and shrubs are possible, especially during the nesting season.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures

- The impact area for the project will be kept to a minimum.
- If construction activities occur during the general nesting season, surveys for nesting birds in adjacent vegetation will be conducted one week prior to the start of construction.

- Any vegetation removal or trimming that is required will be conducted before March 1st or a preconstruction survey will be conducted for nests one week prior to the start of construction.
- At no time will active bird nests (with eggs or young) be destroyed.
- If any sensitive biological resources are found during construction, all activities that may harm that resource shall cease, until a biologist, and the appropriate resource agencies are contacted to review options.
- Construction lighting will be directed away from adjacent properties to avoid impacts to wildlife.

Reference:

California Natural Diversity Database. Wildlife & Habitat Data Analysis Branch Department of Fish and Game Date (Version 07/01/06). Whittier quad.

(Accessed September 27, 2006).

Sibley, D. 2003. The Sibley Field Guide of Birds of Western North America. Alfred A. Knopf. First Edition.

CalFlora: Information on California plants for education, research and conservation. [web application]. 2005. Berkeley, California: The CalFlora Database [a non-profit organization]. Available: *http://www.calflora.org/*. (Accessed: September 21, 2006)

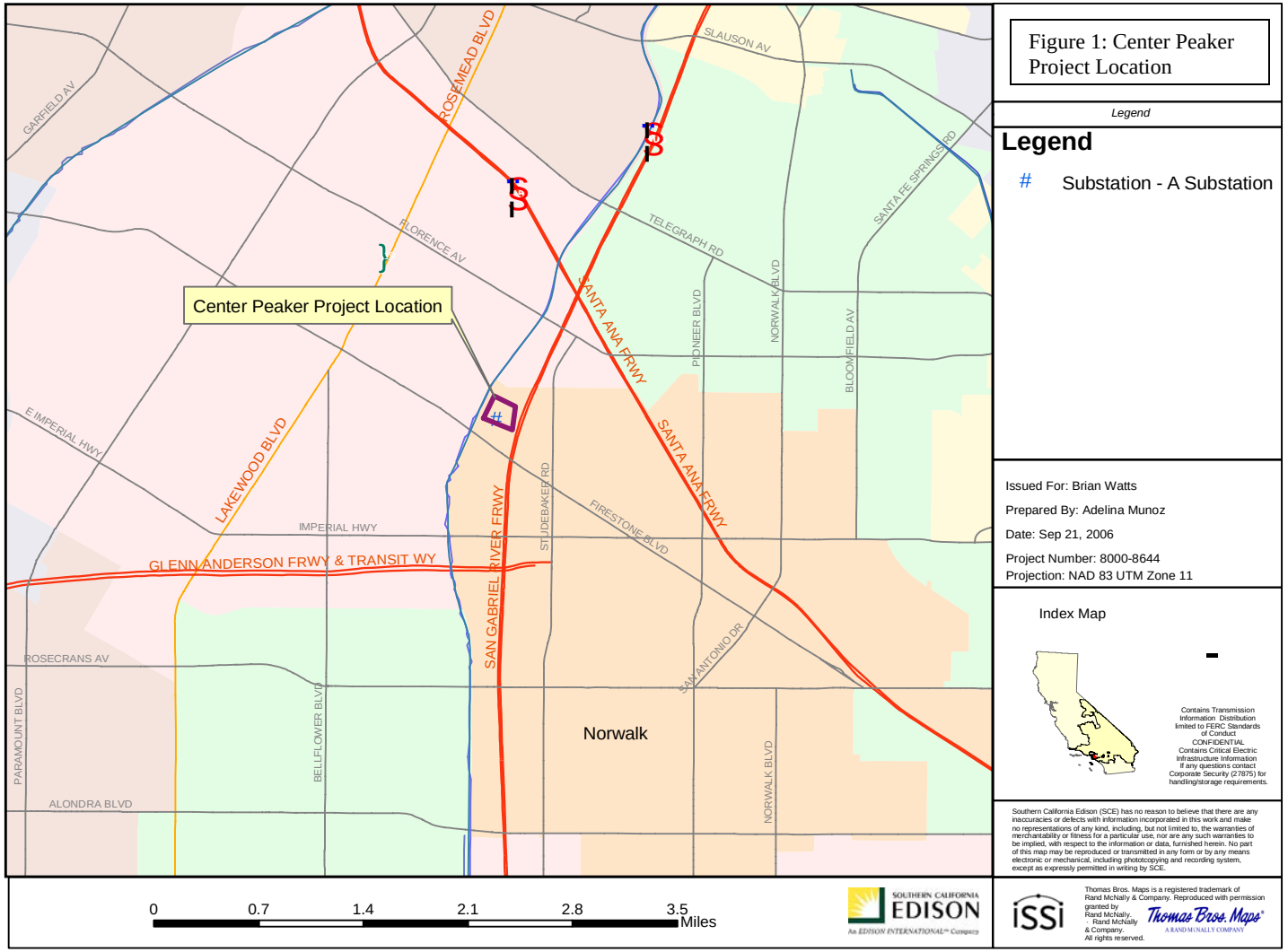

Figure 1: Center Peaker Project Location

Legend

Legend

\# Substation - A Substation

Issued For: Brian Watts

Prepared By: Adelina Munoz

Date: Sep 21, 2006

Project Number: 8000-8644

Projection: NAD 83 UTM Zone 11

Index Map

Contains Transmission Information Distribution limited to FERC Standards of Conduct
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Contains Critical Electric Infrastructure Information
If any questions contact Corporate Security (27875) for handling/storage requirements.

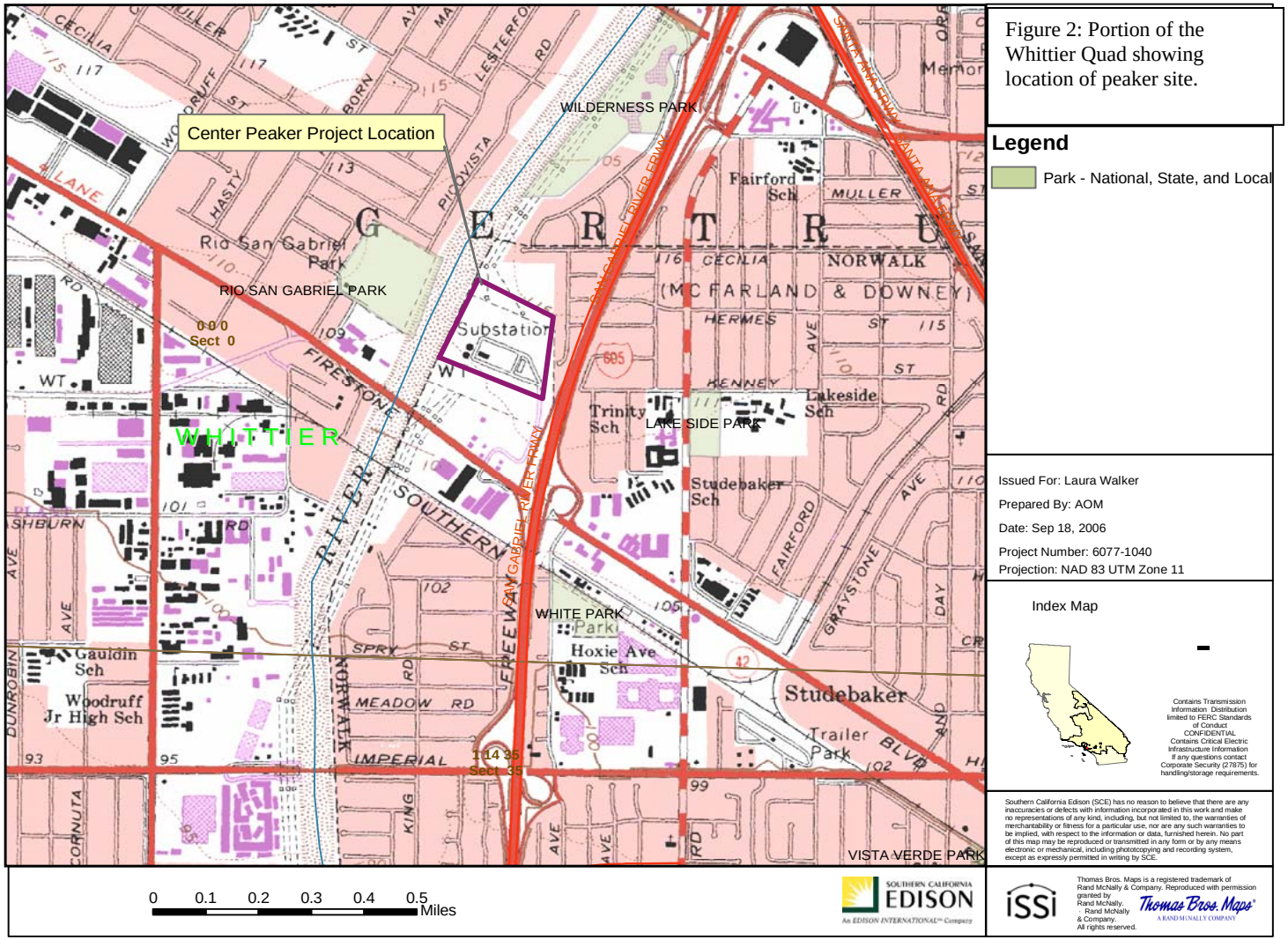

Figure 2: Portion of the Whittier Quad showing location of peaker site.

Legend

Park - National, State, and Local

Issued For: Laura Walker

Prepared By: AOM

Date: Sep 18, 2006

Project Number: 6077-1040

Projection: NAD 83 UTM Zone 11

Index Map

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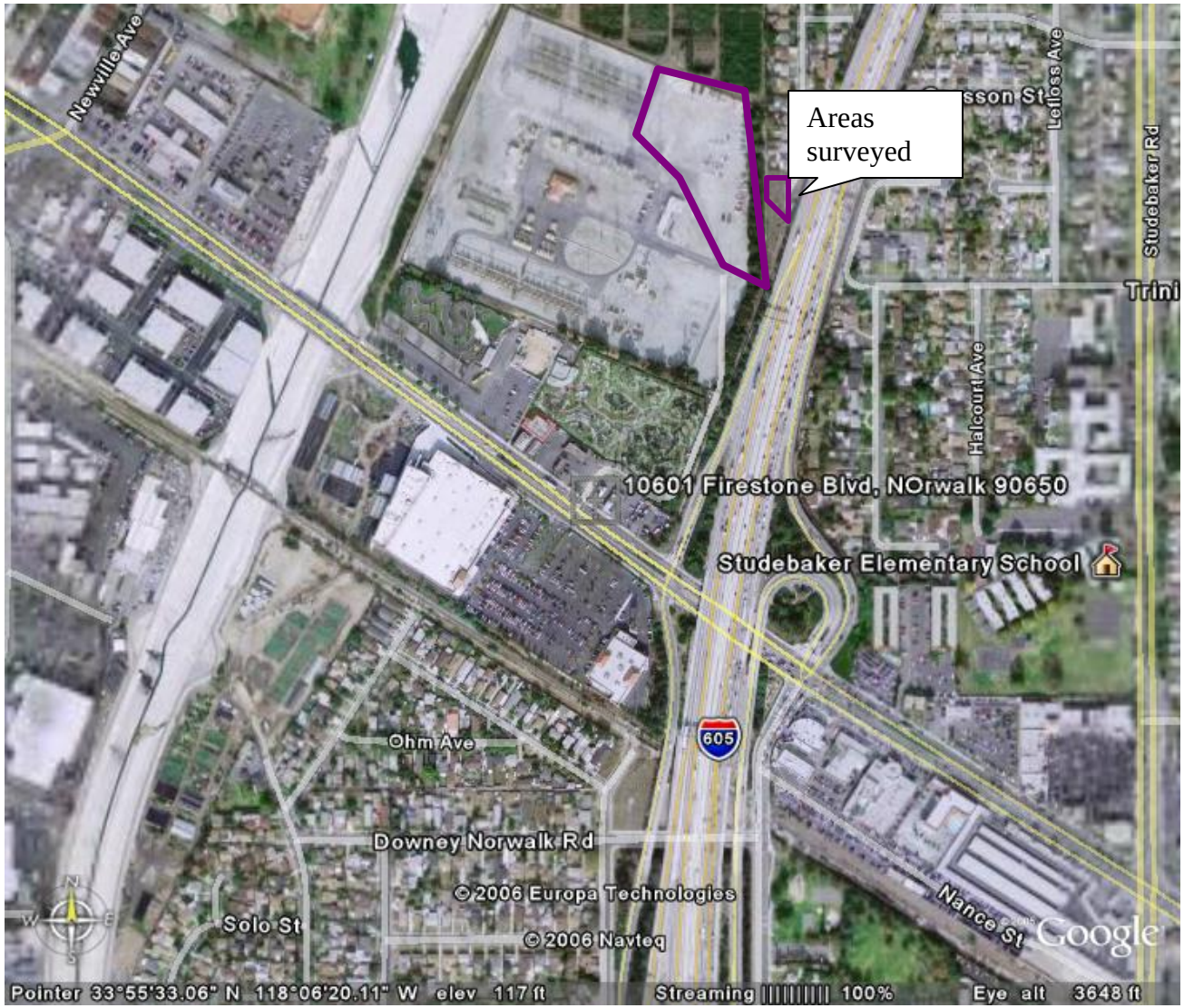

Figure 3, Aerial showing survey area.

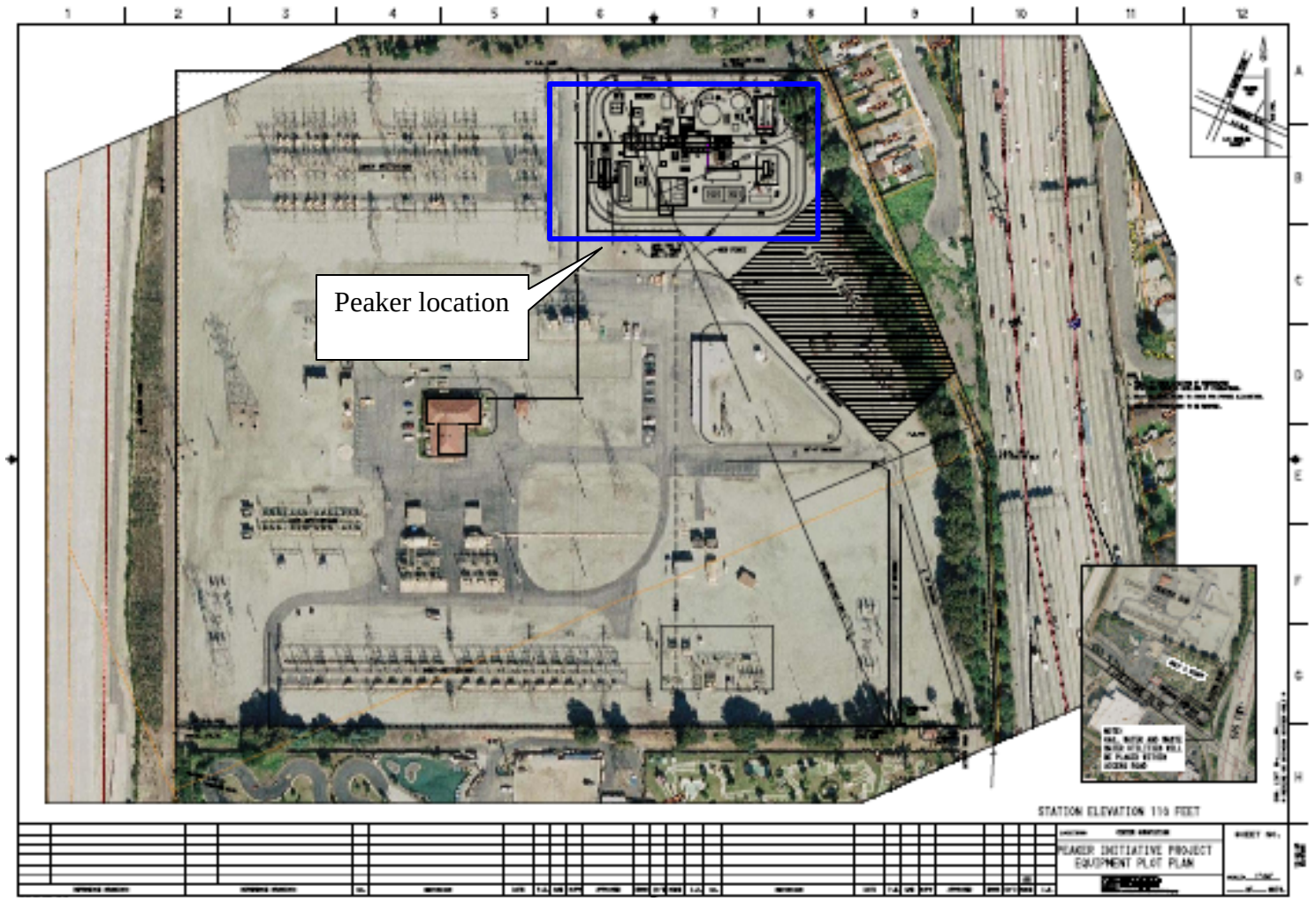

Figure 4: Project plans showing peaker location.

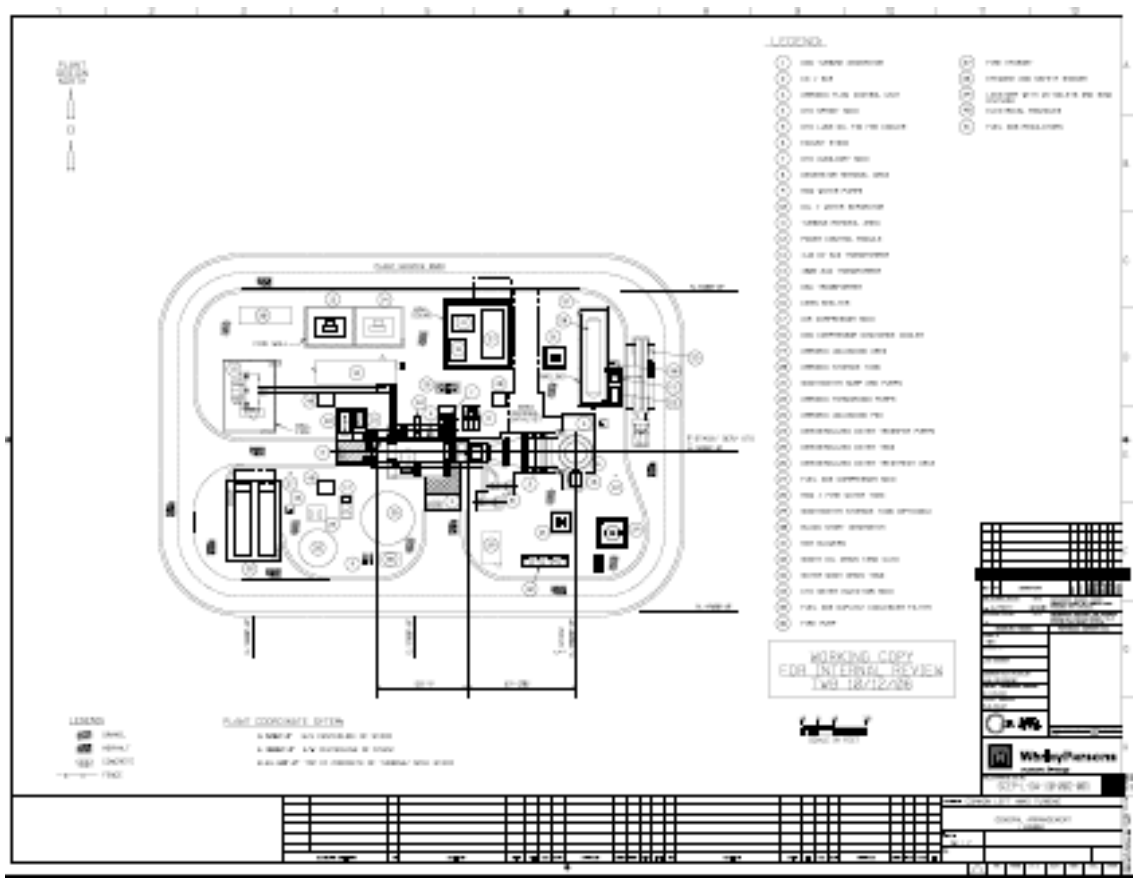

Figure 5: Project layout.

Figure 6: Looking northwest from center of peaker site.

Figure 7: Looking Northeast from center of peaker site.

Figure 8: Looking east from center of peaker site.

Figure 9: Looking south from northernmost edge of substation.

Figure 10: Looking north from southern boundary of the substation.

Figure 11: Looking south from center of substation at existing paved access.

Figure 12: Looking from center of proposed site at several large trees within the substation property.

Figure 13: Looking southwest at proposed site for new access road.

Figure 14: Looking west from Dumont Ave. at proposed site for access road.