

4 ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

This chapter evaluates the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts of the Plan by examining the following environmental issue areas:

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

A. Chapter Organization

This chapter consists of 14 sections that evaluate the environmental impacts of the proposed Park. Each issue area uses the same format and consists of the following subsections:

- ◆ The *Regulatory Setting* section describes which local, State and/or federal regulations are applicable to the Plan.
- ◆ The *Existing Conditions* section describes current conditions with regard to the environmental factor reviewed.
- ◆ The *Standards of Significance* section describes how an impact is judged to be significant in this EIR. These standards are derived from CEQA Appendix G Guidelines unless stated otherwise.
- ◆ The *Impact Analysis* assesses potential impacts (direct and indirect), and tells why impacts were found to be significant or less than significant.

The impact determination is summarized at the end of the checklist heading, and impact statement, as *SU (Significant and Unavoidable)*, *LTS with Mitigation (Less than Significant with Mitigation)*, *LTS (Less than Significant)*, and *NI (No Impact)*.

- ◆ The *Cumulative Impacts* section analyzes impacts that the Plan may have when considered in addition to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. (See further discussion below.)
- ◆ The *Impacts and Mitigation Measures* section numbers and lists identified impacts, and presents measures that would mitigate each impact. In each case, the significance following mitigation is also explained.

B. Cumulative Impact Analysis

A cumulative impact consists of an impact created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR, together with other reasonably foreseeable projects causing related impacts. Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is “cumulatively considerable.”

Where the incremental effect of a project is not “cumulatively considerable,” a Lead Agency need not consider that effect significant, but must briefly describe its basis for concluding that the incremental effect is not cumulatively considerable. Where the cumulative impact caused by the project's incremental effect and the effects of other projects is not significant, the EIR must briefly indicate why the cumulative impact is not significant.

The cumulative discussions in Chapters 4.1 through 4.14 explain the geographic scope of the area affected by each cumulative effect (e.g. immediate Plan Area vicinity, City of East Palo Alto, Palo Alto — East Palo Alto — Menlo Park area, or air basin). The geographic area considered for each cumulative impact depends upon the impact that is being analyzed. For example, in assessing aesthetic impacts, only development within the vicinity of the Plan Area would contribute to a cumulative visual effect because that is

the only area in which the Plan Area is visible. In assessing macro-scale air quality impacts, on the other hand, all development within the air basin contributes to regional emissions of criteria pollutants, and basin-wide projections of emissions is the best tool for determining the cumulative effect.

The CEQA Guidelines provide two approaches to analyzing cumulative impacts. The first is the “list approach,” which requires a listing of past, present, and reasonably anticipated future projects producing related or cumulative impacts. The second is the projections-based approach, which summarizes the relevant growth projections contained in an adopted General Plan or related planning document that is designed to evaluate regional or area-wide conditions. A reasonable combination of the two approaches may also be used.

The cumulative impact analysis in this Draft EIR uses both a projections-based approach and list approach, depending on the topic under consideration. For some environmental topics (such as traffic, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise), a greater geographic extent is used for the cumulative analysis and foreseeable development projects outside of the City of East Palo Alto are taken into consideration. The list below includes all development projects for the Specific Plan area and those within a mile in East Palo Alto and Menlo Park. Only large projects farther than a mile were included, and these were in all in Menlo Park.¹ The SFPUC water system improvement is included here as it involves considerable construction.

¹ The traffic analysis included these projects as well as those farther from the Specific Plan area. For the more extensive list, see Appendix F from the Traffic/Transportation Survey Report, which is included in Appendix 3 to this Draft EIR.

C. Development Proposals

1. Within the Specific Plan Area

New development within the Plan Area has been limited over the past decade. However, a variety of development proposals have been submitted to the City for review and approval, including all of the following.

- ◆ **2896 University Avenue.** This is at the northwestern corner of the Specific Plan Area. It is included in the Housing Element as containing six dwelling units, of which one is low income, three are moderate income, and two are above-moderate income.
- ◆ **Clarum 4 Corners (2398 University Avenue).** This project, located at the southeast of 4 Corners, would provide 115 residential units, including 23 affordable units. It would also include 16,000 square feet of retail uses. The developer has entered into a Disposition and Development Agreement (DDA) with the Redevelopment Agency and has received entitlements for the project.
- ◆ **DKB Homes/Pulgas Mixed Use (2485 Pulgas Avenue).** This horizontal mixed-use project consists of 51 residential units (49,060 square feet) and seven live-work condominiums west of Pulgas Avenue. This project has been entitled for development and a final map for the residential portion of the project has been issued. Across Pulgas Avenue, the mixed-use project consists of approximately 50,000 square feet of office/flex space. The entire project has been entitled for development.
- ◆ **151 Tara Street.** This project, which has been approved by the City, would provide a total of 44,080 square feet of office/flex space. Grading for this project has begun.
- ◆ **Olson Townhomes (965 Weeks Street).** This project would include 55 residential townhomes, including 12 affordable units, and has been approved by the City. The City acquired the land and entitlements associated with this project in spring 2009.
- ◆ **Cooley Landing Park.** A 9-acre City park is planned for Cooley Landing at the end of Bay Road. An initial study has been completed.

2. Outside the Specific Plan Area But Within East Palo Alto

- ◆ **University Plaza (Donohue Street and University Avenue).** This is a large mixed-use project 0.6 miles south of the Plan Area's southwest corner close to Highway 101, northwest of the IKEA building. The existing structures have already been demolished. The total development is 190,000 square feet of class A office and 2,000 square feet of ground-floor retail.
- ◆ **Fire Station Rebuild (2290 University Avenue).** The fire station at 2290 University Avenue will be rebuilt replacing the existing station and two single-family homes. This project is one quarter mile south west of the Plan Area.
- ◆ **992 Runnymede Street.** This is slightly southwest of the Plan Area boundary. It is included in the Housing Element as containing five dwelling units, of which one is low income and four are moderate income.
- ◆ **725 Runnymede Street.** This is south of the southwestern corner of the Plan Area. It is included in the Housing Element as containing six dwelling units, of which one is low-income and five are above-moderate income.
- ◆ **805 Runnymede Street.** This is south of the southwestern corner of the Plan Area. It is included in the Housing Element as containing six dwelling units, of which one is low-income and five are above-moderate income.
- ◆ **1010 Runnymede Street.** This is south of the southeastern corner of the Plan Area. It is included in the Housing Element as containing eight dwelling units, of which one is low-income and seven are above-moderate income.
- ◆ **791 Weeks Street.** This is just south of the southern boundary of the Plan Area. It is included in the Housing Element as containing seven dwelling units, of which one is low-income and six are above-moderate income.

- ◆ **952 Beech Street.** This is south of the southern boundary of the Plan Area. It is included in the Housing Element as containing one dwelling unit, which is above-moderate income.
- ◆ **1125 Westminster Street.** This is in the southwest corner of East Palo Alto, and 0.7 miles west from the southwest corner of the Plan Area. It is included in the Housing Element as containing one dwelling unit, which is above-moderate income.

3. Menlo Park Within a Mile of the Specific Plan Area

- ◆ **BD1 Pipeline Replacement.** The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) is installing a new pipeline, BDPL 5 to run alongside the existing pipelines of BDPL 1 and 2 from Redwood City to the Ravenswood Valve Lot in Menlo Park within the SFPUC right-of-way. Construction began in March 2010 and is expected to be finished in April 2012 and would not therefore greatly affect the Specific Plan Implementation.²
- ◆ **Bay Tunnel.** SFPUC is also excavating a tunnel under the Bay from the Ravenswood shaft site in Menlo Park just north the Dumbarton Rail Bridge, 500 feet north of the Plan Area. The tunnel goes under the tidal wetlands of Ravenswood Open Space, and under the southern spur of the Dumbarton Rail Line to the Bay. Construction on the shaft began August, 2010 and is ongoing, expected to be finished in 2015.³ The project also involves a temporary electrical substation that interconnects with

² SFPUC. Online at http://sfwater.org/bids/projectDetail.aspx?prj_id=266. Accessed July 29, 2011.

³ SFPUC. Online at http://sfwater.org/bids/projectDetail.aspx?prj_id=259. Accessed August 29, 2011.

PG&E's 115 KV transmission line.⁴ A maintenance yard might be established at the Ravenswood tunnel entry.⁵

- ◆ **Facebook Campus.** Facebook has moved its operations to a project site in the City of Menlo Park and plans to substantially increase in size. In December 2011, Facebook began occupying the East Campus as part of the first phase of the project and intends to expand to the West Campus in the second phase of the project. An EIR has been released and is under review.⁶
- **East Campus (1601 Willow Road).** The former Sun Microsystems site would be redeveloped as the Facebook East campus. Although the buildings would largely be re-used, a rise of employees from 3,600 to 6,600 is expected. Facebook is applying for an amendment to existing land use approvals for the East Campus to eliminate the maximum employee cap and substitute a vehicular trip cap of 15,000 daily and 2,600 two-hour peak period trips.⁷
- **West Campus (312-314 Constitution Dr).** The West campus would be developed on a 22-acre site formerly owned by General Motors (GM). The existing buildings at the site would be demolished and the 433,700 square feet of new office space would accommodate approximately 2,800 employees.⁸

⁴ SFPUC, 2010. *Bay Division Pipeline Reliability Upgrade Project. Bay Tunnel. Factsheet.* September.

⁵ SFPUC, 2005. *SFPUC Water System Improvement Program Final Program Environmental Impact Report.* Available online at <http://www.sf-planning.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=6812>.

⁶ City of Menlo Park, 2011. *Menlo Park Facebook Campus Project. Draft EIR.* State Clearinghouse Number 2011042073. December 7.

⁷ City of Menlo Park, 2011. *Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Menlo Park Facebook Campus Project.* State Clearinghouse Number 2011042073. April 21.

⁸ City of Menlo Park, April 19, 2011. *Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Menlo Park Facebook Campus Project.* Online at

- ◆ **Police/City Service Center (1283 Willow Road).** A mixed-use development is under construction east of Highway 101. There will be 3,800 square feet of office and 5,096 square feet of retail.
- ◆ **Dumbarton Rail Corridor and Station.** Plans have been developed to re-start passenger service on a train line over the Dumbarton Bridge, to connect to the Caltrain service on the Peninsula. The Plan is under environmental review and a Draft EIS/EIR is being prepared.⁹ As noted in Chapter 4.14, Transportation/Traffic, of this Draft EIR, traffic to and from stations has been included in general terms within traffic forecasts. However, the station proposed for Menlo Park, east of University Avenue just north of the plan area is not included as the location has not yet been chosen.

4. Menlo Park More Than a Mile from the Specific Plan Area

- ◆ A new Specific Plan for the El Camino Real/Downtown Menlo Park area is in progress. This would result in 91,800 square feet of retail, 240,820 square feet of office, 380 square feet of hotel, and 680 square feet of residential development.
- ◆ As a separate project the civic center would be developed for a 24,100 square-foot gymnasium, 800-square-foot recreational center, and the demolition of a 17,400 square-foot gymnasium and construction of a new 19,400-square-foot gymnasium.

http://service.govdelivery.com/docs/CAMENLO/CAMENLO_176/CAMENLO_176_20110419_en.pdf.

⁹ Minutes of the San Mateo County Transportation Agency (SMCTA) Dumbarton Rail Policy Advisory Committee, April 2011. Online at http://www.smcta.com/dumbarton_rail/agenda/PAC_Agenda_Packet_04-22-2011.pdf.