

4.12 POPULATION AND HOUSING

This chapter describes the existing population and housing conditions in East Palo Alto and the Ravenswood/4 Corners Transit-Oriented Development Specific Plan area and evaluates the potential impacts of the Plan on population and housing. A summary of the relevant regulatory setting and existing conditions is followed by a discussion of Plan-specific and cumulative impacts.

A. Regulatory Framework

This section describes the regulatory setting as it relates to population and housing in the Ravenswood/4 Corners Transit-Oriented Development Specific Plan area.

1. City of East Palo Alto General Plan

The primary regulatory document addressing population and housing in East Palo Alto is the General Plan. Table 4.12-1 includes a list of the relevant goals and policies related to population and housing.

a. Land Use Element

The Land Use Element calls for a mix of land uses to meet the community's needs and to provide housing sites to support commercial services.

b. Housing Element

The City of East Palo Alto adopted the Housing Element in June 2010. The Housing Element identifies a number of sites in East Palo Alto where new housing could be accommodated through 2014, as required by the State-mandated Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) process.¹ As shown in Figure 4.10-2, these sites include several parcels on Pulgas Avenue, in Ravenswood. The Housing Element states that housing must be accommodated on these sites in order to provide opportunities for housing that is affordable to extremely-low-income, very-low-income, and low-income residents, in

¹ City of East Palo Alto, 2010, *City of East Palo Alto Housing Element*, page 4-9.

TABLE 4.12-1 **GENERAL PLAN POLICIES RELEVANT TO POPULATION AND HOUSING**

Goal/Policy Number	Goal/Policy Content
Land Use Element	
Goal 1.0	<i>Develop a balanced land use pattern that meets community needs for residential, commercial, industrial, and public uses.</i>
Policy 1.3	Promote mixed commercial and residential use projects to conserve land and provide additional housing opportunities and population to support commercial services and retail sales.
Housing Element	
Goal 1.0	<i>Sufficient numbers and varieties of housing units (houses, townhomes, condominiums, and apartments) needed to: meet the State’s mandate to replace affordable units/bedrooms demolished due to Redevelopment Agency action; address the City’s Regional Housing Needs Determination; and facilitate housing development for all incomes segments within East Palo Alto, including extremely low-, very low-, low-, moderate-, and above-moderate income housing.</i>
Policy 1.1	Work collaboratively with the development community to facilitate the development of a range of housing choices (by type, size, and price range) that meet the City’s needs.
Goal 2.0	<i>Balanced development that links housing to jobs</i>
Policy 2.1	Promote the concept of smart growth whereby housing is concentrated around job centers and along transportation corridors in order to reduce traffic, improve air quality, conserve energy, and increase efficient land use.
Action 2.1	Develop a specific plan for the Ravenswood/4 Corners Transit-Oriented Development Area to guide the conversion of the existing light and heavy industrial uses into higher density residential, commercial, and mixed-use uses that will support a future potential transit station.
Action 2.2	Evaluate development standards and identify rezoning opportunities along University Avenue’s commercial nodes to increase mixed-use development along the corridor.

TABLE 4.12-1 **GENERAL PLAN POLICIES RELEVANT TO POPULATION AND HOUSING (CONTINUED)**

Goal/Policy Number	Goal/Policy Content
Action 2.3	As a result of the fiscal merger, the affordable housing set aside will increase from 20 to 30 percent in the Ravenswood Industrial Area. Consider, as appropriate, setting aside more than 20 percent of the redevelopment tax increment funds for housing in all redevelopment areas.
Policy 2.2	Encourage mixed-use and high-density residential development in the Ravenswood and University Corner/Bay Road areas to ensure that a minimum of 25 percent of these areas are devoted to residential uses.
Goal 3.0	<i>Available residential sites for the development of a range of housing types and prices.</i>
Policy 3.1	Ensure adequate residential sites are zoned at appropriate densities and available for development in order to accommodate the range of housing types and prices needed to meet the City’s Regional Housing Needs Determination.
Action 3.2	Rezone the 4.71 acre parcel (APN: 063-121-020), the 0.92 acre parcel (APN: 063-121-210), and the 0.89 acre parcel (APN: 063-121-200) located at the north end of Pulgas Avenue to High Density Residential or General Commercial (mixed-use) and achieve a minimum density 30 dwelling units per acre. Rezoning will include a review of development standards to ensure the feasibility of development for low, very low-, and extremely low-income housing. The City will also ensure that at least 50 percent of the needed units are on sites designated for residential use only and will ensure the project review process remains ministerial. The Planning Commission may review the design merits of the project and may call for a project proponent to make design-related modifications but will not deliberate the project’s merits or exercise judgment to reject or deny the “residential use” itself.

Source: City of East Palo Alto 1999 General Plan and 2010 Housing Element.

accordance with the City’s RHNA obligations. The Housing Element requires these sites to be rezoned to allow for residential or mixed-use development that provides at least 30 dwelling units per acre.²

² City of East Palo Alto, 2010, *City of East Palo Alto Housing Element*, page 4-13.

B. Existing Conditions

This section describes the current conditions with regard to population and housing within the Specific Plan Area. Several sources of statistics are used in this chapter (and throughout the EIR and Specific Plan): Statistics from the 2005-2009 American Community Survey provide details of community structure and were the most recent full datasets available at the time of preparation of this Draft EIR; statistics from the U.S. Department of Finance are used for the most recent overall figures for population and housing units in the City of East Palo Alto; and statistics from the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) from 2009 provide the most commonly used projections for regional growth. At the time of publication of this Draft EIR, 2010 Census figures were not yet fully available.

1. Population

As of 2010, there are approximately 33,524 people in East Palo Alto.³ Between 2000 and 2010, the population of East Palo Alto has grown by 14 percent. During this same period, the County of San Mateo total population grew by 7 percent,

The majority of households in East Palo Alto, or 72 percent, are comprised of families. Of the total households, 42 percent are married-couple households and 31 percent are single-family households.⁴ Families in East Palo Alto are larger than San Mateo County families with an average family size of 4.16 people compared to an average family size of 3.32 people.

As shown on Table 4.12-2, ABAG growth projections indicate significant growth in East Palo Alto between 2010 and 2035. The population of East

³ State of California, Department of Finance, May 2010. *E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2001-2010, with 2000 Benchmark.*

⁴ American Community Survey, Data Set: 2005-2009 Selected Social Characteristics in the United States, San Mateo County and East Palo Alto.

TABLE 4.12-2 **GROWTH PROJECTIONS 2010-2035**

	2010	2035	Total Change 2010-2035	% Change 2010-2035
City of East Palo Alto				
Population	32,700	43,300	10,600	32%
Households	7,780	10,260	2,480	32%
San Mateo County				
Population	733,300	893,000	159,700	22%
Households	264,400	322,620	58,220	22%

Source: ABAG 2009 Projections.

Palo Alto is expected to be 43,300, a 32 percent increase from the 2010 population. Between 2010 and 2035, the population of San Mateo County is expected to grow by 22 percent.

2. Employment

According to the Association of Bay Area Governments' 2009 Projections, there were 2,300 jobs in East Palo Alto in 2010. As shown in Table 4.12-3, the majority, or 39 percent, of the jobs were in the Health, Educational, and Recreational Service category; 20 percent of the jobs were in the Financial and Professional category; 16 percent of the jobs were in the Manufacturing, Wholesale, and Transportation category; 13 percent of the jobs were in the Other category; and 11 percent were in the Retail category.

According to the ABAG 2009 Projections, there will be 7,080 jobs in East Palo Alto in 2035. As shown in Table 4.12-3, 33 percent of the jobs will be in the Health, Educational, and Recreational Service category, 22 percent will be in the Manufacturing, Wholesale, and Transportation category; 19 percent of

TABLE 4.12-3 *JOBS IN EAST PALO ALTO, 2010-2035*

Job Type	Percent		Percent	
	2010	2010	2035	2035
Manufacturing, Wholesale and Transportation	370	16%	1,570	22%
Retail	260	11%	640	9%
Financial and Professional	460	20%	1,200	17%
Health, Educational and Recreational Service	900	39%	2,350	33%
Other	310	13%	1,320	19%
Total	2,300	100%	7,080	100%

Source: ABAG 2009 Projections.

the jobs will be in the Other category; and 9 percent of the jobs will be retail-related.

3. Housing

According to the California Department of Finance, there were approximately 7,799 housing units in East Palo Alto in 2010.⁵ Of the total housing units, approximately 56 percent were single family homes, 42 percent were multi-family units, and 2 percent were mobile homes. As of 2010, only 1 percent of East Palo Alto housing units were vacant while San Mateo County had a vacancy rate of 1.6 percent. According to the 2005-2007 American Community Survey, the average household size in East Palo Alto was 4.2 persons which is significantly higher than the average of San Mateo County with 2.7 persons per household.⁶

⁵ State of California, Department of Finance, E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2001-2010, with 2000 Benchmark. Sacramento, California, May 2010.

⁶ City of East Palo Alto, 2010. *Housing Element*, page 2-13.

C. Standards of Significance

Using the CEQA Appendix G thresholds, population and housing impacts associated with the Plan would be considered significant if the Plan would:

- a. Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure).
- b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.
- c. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

In addition, the City of East Palo Alto has adopted the following threshold of significance. Population and housing impacts associated with the Plan would be considered significant if the Plan would:

- d. Cause the City to lose four housing units or more as a consequence of redevelopment.

D. Impact Discussion

This section discusses the potential impacts from the implementation of the Specific Plan on population and housing in the Specific Plan area. This section is organized by and responds to each of the potential impacts identified in the previous section, Standards of Significance.

- a. Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure). (*LTS*)

Implementation of the Specific Plan would add an additional 835 residential units (19 single-family houses and 816 multi-family residential units) and approximately 1.7 million square feet of commercial, industrial, or office uses over the horizon of the Specific Plan. According to buildout projections pre-

pared by The Planning Center | DC&E, the Specific Plan would result in approximately an additional 2,766 residents and approximately 4,850 additional employees by the 2035 Plan Horizon. However this growth is expected and has been planned for (e.g., growth is within ABAG's population projections as detailed in Table 4.12-2 and is less than 1 percent over ABAG's employment projections as detailed in Table 4.12-3), and the impacts have been addressed in the individual chapters in this EIR.

Furthermore, the addition of industrial, commercial, and office uses could also indirectly increase the demand for housing not only within the Specific Plan area, but throughout East Palo Alto by increasing the number of employees in the area that may want to live near work. However, as stated above, ABAG projects an additional 2,480 households in East Palo Alto by 2035 while the Specific Plan is projected to only generate 816 additional households by 2035. Hence, household growth induced by the Specific Plan is well within the growth already projected by ABAG.

Therefore, the impact of unexpected population growth associated with implementation of the Specific Plan would be *less than significant*.

- b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. *(NI)*

There is the potential to displace existing housing, particularly through large scale redevelopment of already developed land and buildings within the Plan Area south of Bay Road, mainly the new proposed Mixed-Use area along the south side of Bay Road between University and Clarke Avenues. However, all redevelopment will be voluntary in nature, so housing would not be displaced without permission of the owners of the residential units.

There are some existing residential areas south of Bay Road with apartment buildings that would be re-designated for Mixed Use under the Plan. The mixed uses would be retail or office on the ground floor with office or residential uses above. It is therefore possible that, in this area, some residential uses would be displaced by non-residential uses, although it is also possible

that redevelopment could lead to an overall increase in residential density. South of this band of Mixed Uses, the single-family residential uses would become Medium/High Density Residential uses with an increase in housing density.

No land use changes are proposed for the existing single-family neighborhood north of Bay Road and west of Demeter Street, the Medium/High Density Residential area along Bay Road west of University Avenue.

The Specific Plan is closely aligned with the goals and policies of the City's General Plan including Land Use Element Policy 3.1 which calls for mixed commercial and residential use projects and Housing Element Goal 1 which calls for providing a sufficient number and variety of housing units.

Therefore, in consideration of all of the above aspects, the Specific Plan would have a *less-than-significant* impact on the displacement of housing units.

- c. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. *(NI)*

Although the majority of the residential development proposed by the Specific Plan would either occur in infill locations or on non-residential parcels, there is the potential to displace existing residents, particularly through large scale redevelopment of already developed land and buildings within the Plan Area south of Bay Road, mainly the new Mixed-Use area along the south side of Bay Road between University and Clarke Avenues. However, the Specific Plan would ensure that there are adequate housing sites available, as any potential housing units that would be displaced would be replaced with residential units at the same or at an increased density.

As a result, the Specific Plan is not expected to displace substantial numbers of people who either live, work, or both live and work within the Plan Area. Therefore, the Specific Plan would have *no impact* on the displacement of substantial numbers of people.

- d. Cause the City to lose four housing units or more as a consequence of redevelopment.

Housing that could be removed by implementation of the Specific Plan is limited to some apartment buildings along Bay Road that would be re-designated as Mixed-Use development. Although Mixed-Use development is likely to include residential development above the ground floor, in some areas it could consist entirely of office. As shown in Table 3-1, buildout calculations have assumed that 75 percent of the upper floor space in most of the Mixed-Use areas would be residential, and that redevelopment under the Specific Plan is likely to lead to the addition of 816 new units, which is substantially more than would be removed.

The Specific Plan's land use regulations work to preserve housing units in areas where units exist today. This is particularly true in the case of the existing multi-family residential units along Bay Road. In this area, the Specific Plan promotes mixed-use development with housing as opposed to office. Moreover, the Specific Plan allows a lower commercial FAR and higher a residential density in this area than in other Mixed-Use areas along Bay Road, so as to encourage developers to build projects that provide more housing. The Specific Plan's land use regulations also require a conditional use permit for upper floor office uses in areas that are currently occupied by housing units in order to prevent displacement of housing. There would, therefore, be a *less-than-significant* impact from implementation of the Specific Plan.

2. Cumulative Impacts

This cumulative analysis considers the Plan in the context of the City's General Plan, which takes into account the entire incorporated area of East Palo Alto, including the Specific Plan Area.

Over the next 20 years, the bulk of foreseeable growth in East Palo Alto will be concentrated in the Plan Area. Most of the city is built-out, although there are some vacant or underutilized parcels distributed throughout the city. There would be little retail or commercial development beyond the Plan Area.

Projected growth in housing units and population for the Plan Area is well within ABAG's housing and population projections for East Palo Alto through 2035. Specific Plan implementation could result in the displacement of existing residents and dwelling units, however there would be a net increase of approximately 816 housing units. As growth in East Palo Alto outside the Plan Area would be minimal, the cumulative impact of the Plan in combination with other reasonably foreseeable development would be *less than significant* with respect to growth inducement or displacement of people and housing.

CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO
RAVENSWOOD/4 CORNERS TOD SPECIFIC PLAN
DRAFT EIR
POPULATION AND HOUSING