



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION
OF AN SEIR AND SCOPING MEETING FOR THE
PROPOSED GOP 4 DENSITY TRANSFER PROJECT
MODIFYING THE PREVIOUSLY APPROVED GATEWAY
BUSINESS PARK MASTER PLAN PROJECT**

SCH #2008062059

To: Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

From: City of South San Francisco, Economic and Community Development Department

Subject: Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Focused Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) in Compliance with Public Resources Code section 21166 and section 15163 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CEQA Guidelines). The City of South San Francisco (City) is the Lead Agency under CEQA for the proposed project identified below. The City will prepare an SEIR focused on transportation issues (including Vehicle Miles Traveled) for the proposed project identified below.

Project Title and Description: The Project is entitled the “GOP 4 Density Transfer Project.” This Project would modify the previously-approved Gateway Business Park Master Plan project. The GOP 4 Density Transfer Project proposes to transfer up to 120,221 square feet of development potential from some undeveloped adjacent property, and use it to expand one of the buildings approved for Phase 4 of the Gateway Business Park Master Plan project (“GOP 4”) by that amount, to be configured in four additional floors. Additional details are set forth below.

Project Location: GOP 4 is located at 850 and 900 Gateway Boulevard, southeast of the intersection of Gateway Boulevard and Oyster Point Boulevard, in the City of South San Francisco, County of San Mateo. Modifications to the GOP Master Plan, which also encompasses 1000 Gateway (GOP 1), 750 Gateway (GOP 2), and 700 Gateway (GOP 3), will be required to implement the GOP 4 Density Transfer Project. Conforming amendments to or repeal of the Gateway Specific Plan would also be required. The Specific Plan encompasses the area generally bounded by Oyster Point Boulevard on the north, East Grand Avenue on the south, Forbes Boulevard extending northerly along a line generally west of and parallel to Eccles Avenue on the east, and Poletti Way on the west.

Prior Environmental Review: The Gateway Business Park Master Plan project was studied in an EIR, SCH #2008062059. The City Council certified the EIR and adopted CEQA findings in Resolution No. 18-2010. The project was subsequently modified to reconfigure the layout and update the architecture. The City Council found the EIR adequate for the modified Master Plan project and for a Precise Plan for Phase 1, and re-adopted CEQA findings, in Resolution No. 43-2013. The Planning Commission later adopted Addenda addressing Precise Plans for Phases 2, 3 and 4 of the Master Plan project, in Resolutions No. 2834-2018 and No. 2858-2020.

Current Environmental Review: The Supplemental EIR will supplement the prior EIR with a project-level discussion of the transportation impacts of the 120,221 square foot expansion proposed by the GOP 4 Density Transfer Project. The SEIR also will include evaluations of all other resource areas, for which it is probable there will be no new or more severe significant environmental impacts, to demonstrate that no supplemental or subsequent analysis is required for those resource areas. The SEIR will be prepared in compliance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. An Initial Study has not been prepared. Further details are provided below.

Agency/Public Comments: The City requests your comments regarding the scope and content of the environmental review to be conducted for the proposed GOP 4 Density Transfer Project. The City will accept written comments on this NOP between **November 16, 2021 and December 20, 2021**, a period of thirty four (34) days to account for the Thanksgiving holiday. Please send your comments by email to Billy.Gross@ssf.net or by mail to:

City of South San Francisco
Department of Economic and Community Development
Attn: Billy Gross, Principal Planner
315 Maple Avenue
South San Francisco, CA 94080

Scoping Meeting: Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21083.9 and Sections 15206 and 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the Lead Agency also hereby gives notice of a public scoping meeting on this project to receive comments on the scope of the EIR. In accordance with current shelter-in-place mandates related to COVID-19, the Lead Agency will conduct a **virtual scoping meeting on December 6, 2021, beginning at 4:00 PM**, via webinar and telephone conference line. During the scoping meeting, agencies, organizations, and the public will have an opportunity to submit comments. The scoping meeting will include a presentation providing an overview of the project and the CEQA process, followed by a question and answer session for online and phone attendees. Please note that comments are limited to three minutes per speaker.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://ssf-net.zoom.us/j/84108657411?pwd=OUlubEdrZlV5eUdnWINVdW9OSIU4UT09>

Meeting ID: 841 0865 7411

Passcode: 712141

One tap mobile

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+13462487799,,84108657411#,,,,*712141# US (Houston)

Dial by your location

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

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+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

833 548 0282 US Toll-free

877 853 5257 US Toll-free

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833 548 0276 US Toll-free

Find your local number: <https://ssf-net.zoom.us/j/kb3KEBS50m>

Please note that there are three ways to comment during the meeting:

1. ***Send a comment via email to Billy.Gross@ssf.net.*** City staff will monitor emails during the meeting and any email comment received during the meeting will be read into the record. Your email should be limited so that it complies with the 3-minute time limitation for public comment.
2. ***Call the Planning Division Hotline at (650) 829-4669.*** Voice Messages will be monitored during the meeting and read into the record. Your voicemail should be limited so that it complies with the 3-minute time limitation for public comment.
3. ***Submit a comment via the “chat” function in the Zoom meeting app.*** City staff will monitor the chat and will read comments and questions into the record.

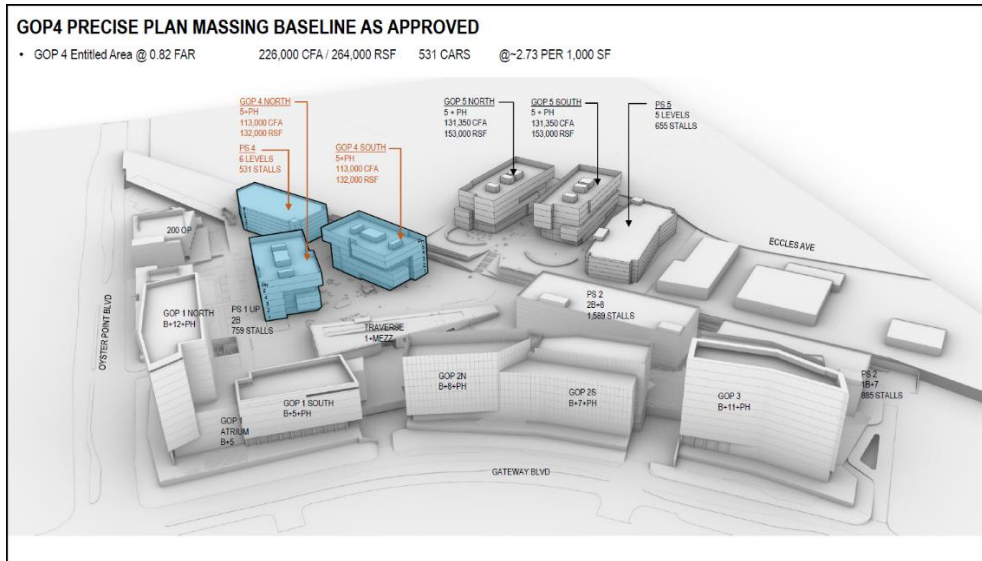
EIR Process: Following the close of the NOP comment period, a Draft Supplemental Focused EIR will be prepared that will take into consideration NOP comments. The Draft Supplemental Focused EIR will be released for public review and comment for the required 45-day review period. Following the close of the public review period, the City will prepare a Final Supplemental Focused EIR that will include responses to all substantive comments received on the Draft Supplemental Focused EIR. The Draft SFEIR and Final SFEIR will be considered by City decisionmakers in making the decision to certify the SFEIR and to approve or deny the components of the proposed project. If certified by the City, the SFEIR may be relied on by other agencies for purposes of carrying out portions of the proposed project within their respective jurisdictions. The certified SFEIR may also be relied upon by the City and other agencies in connection with subsequent activities within the Master Plan project, and to determine the nature and scope of any supplemental or subsequent environmental review.

Project Description, Location and Property Ownership

Affiliates of BioMed Realty (BMR) propose to modify the approvals for Phase 4 of the GOP Master Plan project to implement what is, in essence, a transfer of density from some adjacent former rail spur properties included in the separate GOP 5 project. Specifically, BMR proposes to deed restrict the rail spur properties to eliminate development of the transferred FAR. In exchange, BMR has applied to the City to modify the Precise Plan for Phase 4 (GOP 4) to add 4 floors to the northern GOP 4 building. This modification would allow BMR to take advantage of up to 120,221 additional square feet that could otherwise be built on the adjacent rail spur properties.

I. Background.

The GOP Master Plan project and the adjacent GOP 5 project are both located in the City’s East of 101 Area. Though the entitlements for each project remain separate, the physical development is intended to integrate the two projects into one life sciences campus connected by pedestrian pathways and a grand staircase. As currently entitled, the GOP Master Plan project and GOP 5 project are as follows, with GOP 4 highlighted in blue:



A. Approved GOP Master Plan Project and Location.

In 2013, the City approved a modified master plan for the Gateway Business Park Master Plan project, which is now known as the Gateway of Pacific, or GOP project. The GOP Master Plan project site is located southeast of the intersection of Gateway Boulevard and Oyster Point Boulevard, at 1000 Gateway (GOP 1), 750 Gateway (GOP 2), 700 Gateway (GOP 3), and 850 & 900 Gateway (GOP 4), in San Mateo County. The Master Plan project site is designated Business Commercial in the General Plan, is subject to the Gateway Specific Plan, and is in the Gateway Specific Plan zoning district. The project is vested into these plans and regulations by a Development Agreement.

The GOP Master Plan contemplates phased development. The City has approved precise plans for four phases, and has approved Lot Line Adjustments that accommodate these phases.

The General Plan currently imposes an FAR limitation of 1.25 on the GOP Master Plan site. The Master Plan currently reflects this 1.25 FAR limitation and permits individual parcels to be developed at FARs greater than 1.25, so long as development of the entire Master Plan site does not exceed 1.25.

1. GOP 1.

The Precise Plan for GOP 1 was approved by City Council Resolution 44-2013 in 2013. Construction started around May 2017 and the first tenants occupied the building in early 2021. GOP 1 has north and south towers. GOP 1 also hosts an amenity building designed to serve the entire campus, known as “Traverse.” There are two parking levels under the plaza and amenity building.

2. GOP 2.

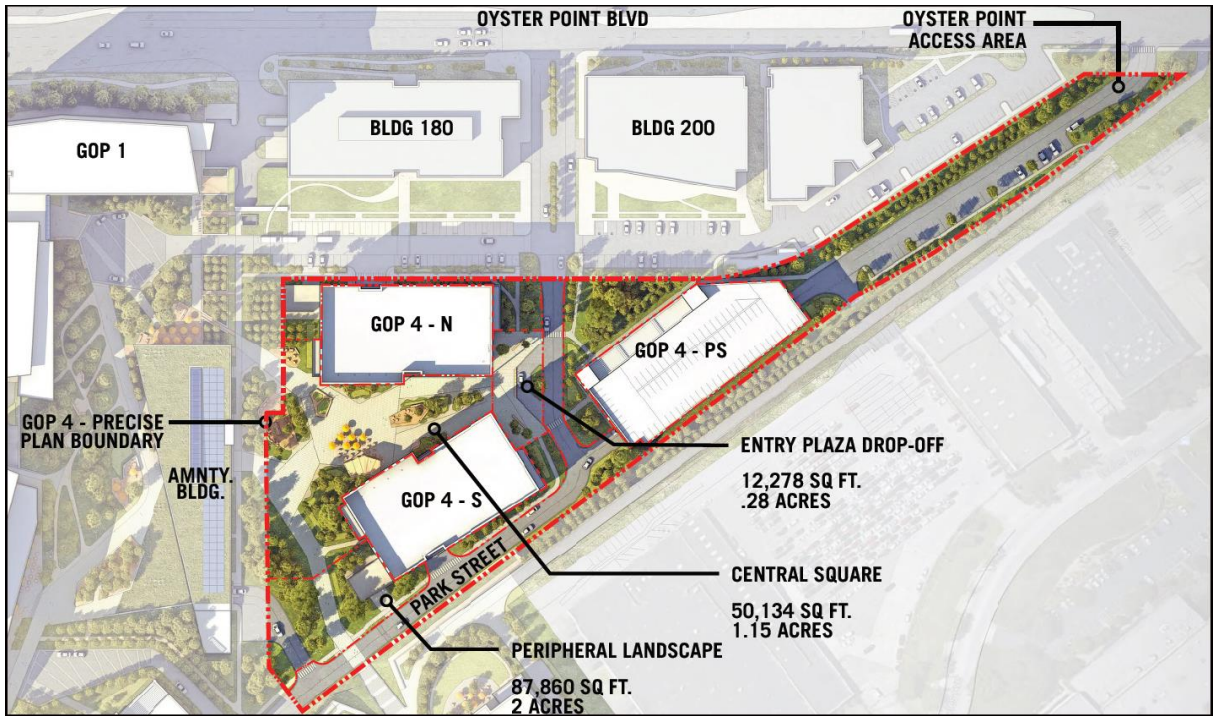
The Precise Plan for GOP 2 was approved by Planning Commission Resolution No. 2835-2018 in 2018. Construction started around April 2019, and occupancy is projected in approximately March 2022. GOP 2 has north and south towers, with parking accommodated in a parking structure on the GOP 2 site.

3. GOP 3.

The Precise Plan for GOP 3 also was approved by Planning Commission Resolution No. 2835-2018 in 2018. Construction started around August 2019, and occupancy is targeted for late 2022. GOP 3 has a single building, with parking accommodated in a parking structure on the GOP 3 site.

4. GOP 4.

The GOP 4 Precise Plan was approved by Planning Commission Resolution No. 2859-2020 in 2020. Neither demolition nor construction have commenced. GOP 4 was approved for two five-story buildings and a parking structure of 6 levels, with a partial floor on the 6th level. The approved GOP 4 Precise Plan allows the following development:



5. GOP Master Plan Parking Ratio.

The GOP Master Plan and the Phase 1 Precise Plan were approved in 2013 subject to condition of approval A.2, which states:

The parking ratio for the Master Plan and Precise Plan project shall not exceed 2.73 spaces per 1,000 square feet at any time. The current and all future Precise Plan applications shall include site development plans that specify the campus-wide parking ratio does not exceed 2.73 spaces per 1,000 square feet. If the campus-wide ratio exceeds the 2.73 spaces per 1,000 square feet ratio, the developer shall provide a site plan that indicates how parking spaces on the entire campus will be allocated and used.

Accordingly, GOP 1 through 4, as currently entitled, are parked at a ratio of 2.73 spaces per 1,000 square feet of Floor Area. The total number of parking spaces built, under construction or approved is 3,776.

6. Prior GOP Master Plan Environmental Review.

The GOP Master Plan was approved based upon a comprehensive EIR the City re-certified in 2013. For each Precise Plan approval, the City relied upon an Addendum to that EIR, which had been prepared to address any changes that had arisen since the EIR was certified. The City determined that there were no changes to the project or the surrounding circumstances, and no significant information, that showed any new or more severe impacts. The most recent such decision was made in Resolution 2858-2020, adopted on August 6, 2020 in connection with approval of the GOP 4 Precise Plan. No challenges were filed against that Resolution.

7. GOP Master Plan Land Ownership.

BMR is seeking modified entitlements on behalf of the following affiliates, which own the lands within the GOP Master Plan site as follows:

GOP 1 - BMR-Gateway of Pacific I LP

GOP 2 - BMR-Gateway of Pacific II LP

GOP 3 - BMR-Gateway of Pacific III LP

GOP 4 - BMR-Gateway of Pacific IV LP

B. Approved GOP 5 Project.

No modifications are proposed to the GOP 5 Project approvals. However, GOP 5 is described here because it is the source of the density transfer.

The GOP 5 project site is designated Business and Technology Park in the General Plan, and is located in the Business Technology Park zoning district. The General Plan and zoning both limit FAR at the site to 1.0. The GOP 5 project is vested into these plans and regulations by a Development Agreement.

In 2016, the City Council adopted Resolution 94-2016 approving a use permit, design review, transportation demand management plan and alternative landscape plan for a project then known as 475 Eccles. The 475 Eccles project approvals allowed construction of two life sciences buildings, which achieved the 1.0 FAR on the 475 Eccles parcel, and a parking structure. At that time, 475 Eccles was separated from the GOP Master Plan site by some former rail spurs that connect Oyster Point Boulevard to Forbes Boulevard.

BMR subsequently acquired the rail spur property, and proposed to use it to connect the GOP Master Plan site with the 475 Eccles project site. Specifically, BMR proposed to develop the rail spurs into a publicly accessible multi-use path connecting Oyster Point Boulevard with Forbes Boulevard, with pedestrian amenities, all to implement the City's draft "rails to trails" plan. A grand staircase allowing access from the lower elevation of the GOP Master Plan site to the higher elevation of the 475 Eccles site was also proposed.

Accordingly, BMR submitted applications to modify the 2016 approvals for 475 Eccles to expand the project to encompass the rail spurs and include this development. At the same time, BMR also sought approval to update the 475 Eccles design to bring it up to date and make it more compatible with the neighboring GOP Master Plan project, without increasing the square footage previously approved for 475 Eccles. This revised 475 Eccles project, including the addition of the rail spur development, is known as "GOP 5."

In 2020, the City Council adopted Resolution 119-2020 approving the GOP 5 project. The approvals allow up to 262,287 square feet of Floor Area in two new buildings, plus a parking structure. The approved project is depicted as follows:



Because the GOP 5 project does not include any development that would take advantage of the 1.0 FAR applicable to the rail spurs, the Development Agreement the City entered into for GOP 5 recognizes that:

L. WHEREAS, the modified development proposal is 262,287 square feet . . . based on the application of an FAR of approximately 1.0 to the [475 Eccles parcel], and does not include the density that could be available to Owner based on the application of allowable FAR to the [rail spurs]; and

M. WHEREAS, by entering into this Agreement, Owner has not waived any right it may have for future additional development on the Property based on the application of allowable FAR to the Property.

The rail spurs consist of two legal parcels. APN 015-071-220 has 39,802 square feet (0.91 acres) and APN 015-071-340 has 80,419 square feet (1.85 acres). Together, this totals 120,221 square feet, or 2.76 acres. Accordingly, the 1.0 FAR allows an additional 120,221 square feet of development that was not used in the GOP 5 project.

II. Proposed GOP 4 Density Transfer Project.

A. Deed Restriction To Reduce FAR of Rail Spurs.

BMR proposes to deed-restrict the rail spur property to eliminate the 1.0 FAR development potential on the rail spurs. The deed restriction would not allow any of the density transferred to GOP 4 to be constructed on the rail spur property. This deed restriction would be required by a condition of approval to the GOP 4 Density Transfer Project approvals. This deed restriction would be recorded in favor of the City and bind the land. Accordingly, the practical effect of this deed restriction would be to reduce the current FAR at the rail spurs to zero.

B. Use of Rail Spur FAR at GOP 4.

The square footage that could be developed under the 1.0 FAR applicable to the rail spurs would be transferred to GOP 4. The GOP 4 North building would be expanded by 4 floors and 120,221 square feet. The resulting building would provide a step-down transition between the GOP 1 North building, which was built at 12 stories above ground level plus a penthouse, and GOP 4 South, which will remain as approved at 5 floors and a penthouse. The approved architectural scheme of the buildings would be extended to the new floors, without any substantive changes in architecture. The Density Transfer Project also includes a generator yard at ground level in the landscaped area on the northwest side of the GOP 4 parking structure.

1. Resulting Square Footage and FAR.

In exchange for effectively reducing the FAR on the rail spurs to zero, the FAR would be increased at GOP 4, and the GOP Master Plan would be amended to conform, as follows:

	GOP 1 Parcel C	GOP 2 Parcel B	GOP 3 Parcel A	GOP 4 Parcel D	GOP Master Plan (1-4)
Lot Square Footage, after most recent LLA	284,584 (6.53 acres)	237,986 (5.46 acres)	185,262 (4.25 acres)	276,639 ^a (6.35 acres)	984,471
As Built or Entitled – Before GOP 4 Density Transfer Project					
Building Floor Area	479,116	371,648	302,722	225,621 ^b	1,379,107
Building Floor Area that counts towards FAR	427,104	312,130	265,734	225,621	1,230,589
FAR	1.50	1.31	1.43	0.82	1.25
After Implementation of the GOP 4 Density Transfer Project, Which Proposes to Transfer 120,221 SF from the Rail Spurs to GOP 4					
Building Floor Area	479,116	371,648	302,722	345,842	1,499,328
Building Floor Area that counts towards FAR	427,104	312,130	265,734	345,842	1,350,810
FAR	1.50	1.31	1.43	1.25	1.37
Notes					
Floor Area is calculated pursuant to Municipal Code § 20.040.008. Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is calculated pursuant to Municipal Code § 20.040.009.					
a. The GOP 4 parcel was 276,422 SF when BMR first applied for the GOP 4 Precise Plan. Pursuant to a Lot Line Adjustment subsequently approved by the City, the GOP 4 parcel is now 276,639 SF.					
b. The approved plan set for GOP 4 shows 226,000 SF of Floor Area. However, subsequent calculations that took into account the exact square footage of GOP 1 – 3 revealed that only 225,261 SF of Floor Area (a difference of 379 square feet) is available to be built at GOP 4 under the 1.25 FAR currently applicable to the entire GOP Master Plan site.					

2. Resulting Parking.

The GOP 4 parking structure was approved at 6 levels (including 5 full floors and a partial level on the 6th floor) and 531 stalls. The parking structure would be expanded by 2.5 floors and 240 stalls, resulting in a structure of 8 levels and 771 stalls. These additional spaces will park the increment of additional square footage at 2.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet of Floor Area. The remainder of the approved GOP Master Plan campus will remain subject to the 2.73/1,000 parking ratio limitation of the Master Plan. After development of the GOP 4 Density Transfer Project, the blended parking ratio for the GOP Master Plan campus as a whole will be 2.67 spaces per 1,000 SF.

C. Approvals Requested.

The approvals anticipated for the GOP 4 Density Transfer Project are:

1. Minor General Plan Amendment to Allow Density Transfer.

A minor amendment to the General Plan would be required to allow a density transfer. Specifically, BMR seeks to add text to the notes in General Plan FAR tables 2.2-1 and 2.2-2 that apply to the Business Commercial land use. The notes would be amended to add the following underlined text:

The Gateway Business Park Master Plan and the Oyster Point Specific Plan are permitted to develop up to a FAR of 1.25 with a TDM, and are allowed to develop additional density to the extent such density would otherwise be available on immediately adjacent property that is (a) subject to an FAR limitation of 1.25 or less; (b) part of the same research & development campus; and (c) deed-restricted to preclude development of the transferred FAR.

2. Specific Plan Repeal or Amendment.

Because the Gateway Specific Plan may be considered outdated, and because the relevant components of the Specific Plan have already been incorporated into the applicable zoning district regulations, the Specific Plan could be repealed. Barring repeal, the Specific Plan would be amended to allow a transfer of density from adjacent property into the Specific Plan area, using the same text as quoted above.

3. Zoning Text Amendment.

The Gateway Specific Plan Zoning District regulations would be amended to allow a transfer of density from an adjacent zoning district, using the same text as quoted above.

4. GOP Master Plan Amendment.

The GOP Master Plan would be amended to allow a transfer of density from adjoining property, using the same text as quoted above.

5. GOP 4 Precise Plan Modification and Design Review.

The GOP 4 Precise Plan would be modified to incorporate an additional 120,221 square feet, with four additional floors on the GOP 4 North building, and 2.5 additional floors on the parking structure. The modifications would undergo associated design review.

6. GOP Master Plan Development Agreement Amendment.

The Development Agreement for the GOP Master Plan project would be amended to encompass the above approvals.

III. Environmental Review of the GOP 4 Density Transfer Project.

The physical changes to the approved Master Plan project that are proposed by the GOP 4 Density Transfer Project consist of a relatively small expansion of 120,221 square feet configured in four floors to be added to the approved design for the GOP 4 North building. Under CEQA, the City is required to evaluate whether, since the most recent CEQA determination was made on August 6, 2020, this change to the GOP Master Plan project, or any changes in the surrounding circumstances, or significant new information relevant to the scope of approvals requested for the GOP Density Transfer Project, result in new or more severe significant adverse environmental impacts.

Because the GOP 4 Density Transfer Project proposes to add additional floors to the approved project without changing building footprints, no new or more severe significant impacts are anticipated in relation to agricultural/forestry resources, biological resources, cultural resources, geology/soils, hydrology/water quality, wildfire, mineral resources, tribal cultural resources or exposure to any hazardous materials resulting from demolition of existing buildings or grading. Due to building, operational and transportation efficiencies that have developed since the EIR was certified, it is anticipated that the 120,221 square-foot expansion will not cause the Master Plan project, as modified by the GOP 4 Density Transfer Project, to exceed the projections of the original EIR with respect to air quality emissions, water demand, or greenhouse gas emissions. The relatively minor expansion without any changes to land uses is not anticipated to result in material changes with respect to impacts related to population/housing, energy demand, public services and utilities, recreation, noise, growth-inducing impacts or land use/planning. The additional floors will provide a visual transition between the GOP 1 buildings and the GOP 4 south building, such that no new or more severe significant aesthetic impacts are anticipated. No changes are proposed to height limitations, and the expansion proposed by the GOP 4 Density Transfer Project would remain subject to mitigation imposed regarding aircraft noise. Accordingly, the Density Transfer Project is not anticipated to change any conclusions relating to consistency with the applicable Airport Land Use Plan. The expansion area will be subject to the same regulations relating to the handling of hazardous materials as the rest of the site, so no new or more severe impacts are anticipated in that context. The SEIR will document the conclusion and none of these resource areas trigger the need for supplemental or subsequent review.

The Supplemental EIR will evaluate whether the vehicle miles travelled associated with the 120,221 square-foot expansion would be significant, and explore mitigation if the impact is found to be significant. The Supplemental EIR also will evaluate whether there are any new or more significant impacts to any other transportation-related resources. The SEIR will evaluate the no project alternative and will assess whether any other potentially feasible alternatives to the GOP 4 Density Transfer Project would reduce or offset any significant Vehicle Miles Traveled impacts.