



## NOTICE OF PREPARATION

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**DATE:** June 18, 2020

**TO:** Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and Interested Parties

**LEAD AGENCY:** City of Santa Clara  
Contact: John Davidson, Principal Planner  
1500 Warburton Avenue  
Santa Clara, CA 95050

**SUBJECT:** Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Freedom Circle Focus Area<sup>1</sup> and Greystar General Plan Amendment

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The City of Santa Clara (City) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed Freedom Circle Focus Area and Greystar General Plan Amendment (project) described below. The City is interested in your agency's views as to the appropriate scope and content of the DEIR's environmental information pertaining to your agency's statutory responsibilities related to the project. Your agency may need to use the environmental impact report prepared by the City when considering permits or other approvals for the project. The City will need the name of a contact person for your agency. For interested individuals, the City would like to be informed of environmental topic(s) of interest to you regarding the project.

The proposed Freedom Circle Focus Area is located in the northern portion of the City of Santa Clara, encompassing several office and industrial parks. The City of Santa Clara will be responsible for certifying the EIR and adopting the Focus Area for the parcels within its jurisdiction. Because the City of Santa Clara has already determined that an EIR is required for the proposed Freedom Circle Focus Area, and as permitted by CEQA Guidelines section 15060(d) (Preliminary Review), the City will not prepare an Initial Study for the project.

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<sup>1</sup> References: Title 14, California Code of Regulations, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, sections 15082, 15103, and 15375.

The proposed project, its location, and its potential environmental effects are described below. The City of Santa Clara welcomes public input during the Notice of Preparation (NOP) review period. The purpose of the scoping process is to solicit public comment regarding the full spectrum of issues and concerns, including a suitable range of alternatives, and the nature and extent of potential environmental impacts and appropriate mitigation measures that should be addressed in the EIR process.

Due to the time limits mandated by the CEQA Guidelines, your response must be sent ***not later than 30 days after your receipt of this notice***. In the event no response or request for additional time is received by the end of the review period, the City may presume that you have no response. Please send your comments to:

City of Santa Clara  
Contact: John Davidson, Principal Planner  
1500 Warburton Avenue  
Santa Clara, CA 95050  
[JDavidson@santaclaraca.gov](mailto:JDavidson@santaclaraca.gov)

To allow for mailing, receipt, and 30-day review of this NOP, the comment period closes on ***July 21, 2020***.

#### **Notice of Scoping Meeting:**

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15082(c) (Notice of Preparation and Determination of Scope of EIR), the City of Santa Clara will conduct a scoping meeting for the purpose of soliciting comments of adjacent cities, responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and interested parties requesting notice as to the appropriate scope and content of the DEIR.

The scoping meeting will include a presentation of the proposed project and a summary of the environmental issues to be analyzed in the DEIR. Following the presentation, interested agencies, organizations, and members of the public will be encouraged to present views concerning what environmental issues should be included in the DEIR. The oral and written comments provided during the scoping meeting will assist the City in scoping the potential environmental effects of the project to be addressed by the DEIR.

The scoping meeting will be held on ***July 1, 2020***, from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m., online, here: <https://santaclaraca.zoom.us/j/99786350285>

You may also dial in using this number: **1 669-900-6833, Webinar ID: 997 8635 0285**



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**Project Title:** Greystar General Plan Amendment / Freedom Circle Focus Area

**Project Applicant:** City of Santa Clara

**Project Location:** The proposed Freedom Circle Focus Area encompasses approximately 108 gross acres in an employment-rich area of northern Santa Clara, comprising several moderate-intensity office and industrial parks accompanied by surface parking, along with the Santa Clara Marriot hotel. The Plan Area is bounded by San Tomas Aquino Creek to the east, Great America Parkway to the west, Great America Theme Park to the north, and Highway 101 to the south. It is proximate to a range of regional destinations and amenities, including Levi's Stadium, Great America Theme Park, and the Santa Clara Convention Center.

**Project Description:**

The Notice of Preparation describes the two parts of the Freedom Circle project: preparation of a Focus Area description, to be incorporated into the General Plan; and the Greystar General Plan Amendment. The Focus Area Plan will describe the vision for the Freedom Circle Area as an intensely urban environment, with Great America Parkway and Mission College Boulevard retaining their commercial character. The Focus Area would allow, subject to a future planning study, 2,500 dwelling units beyond those anticipated in the Greystar General Plan Amendment (described below), and 2 million square feet of additional office space beyond that allowed under the current high-intensity office designation.

The Greystar General Plan Amendment proposes to change the General Plan land use designation for the 13.3 acre Greystar site, which is bounded by San Tomas Aquino Creek to the East, Freedom Circle to the West, and Highway 101 to the south from High Intensity Office (maximum Floor Area Ratio of 2.0) to Very High Density Residential (51-100 Dwelling Unit/Acre). Greystar is proposing a total of 1,100 dwelling units in three 7-story buildings, all of which are proposed to be a maximum of 100 feet in height. The proposal also includes a two-acre public park with a connection to the San Tomas Aquino Creek trail, and up to 2,000 square feet of neighborhood-serving retail. The proposal also includes removing existing view easements along the Bayshore Freeway (US 101) and relocating the City of Santa Clara/Great America sign from its current location to the southeastern corner of the property.

**Required Approvals:**

***City of Santa Clara Discretionary Approvals.*** Implementation of the Freedom Circle Focus Area will require, but is not limited to, the following discretionary approvals by the City of Santa Clara:

- Certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report
- Adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
- Creation of a Freedom Circle focus area within Phase III of the General Plan
- Creation of a land use plan for the subject area to implement the Focus Area land uses.
- Adoption of General Plan amendments and zoning changes as necessary to ensure consistency between the Freedom Circle Focus Area and the City of Santa Clara 2014 General Plan and current zoning code
- Discretionary review as necessary, including CEQA review, for future individual public and private development proposals in the Plan Area

***Other Government Agency Approvals.*** Future individual public and private development proposals in the Plan Area would be expected to also require review or approvals from other jurisdictional agencies, including, but not limited to:

- Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)
- Santa Clara Water and Sewer Utilities
- Silicon Valley Power (SVP)
- San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)
- Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD)
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

**EIR Scope:**

The City of Santa Clara has determined that the proposed Freedom Circle Focus Area will require preparation of a program-level Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The project-specific environmental impacts of the Greystar General Plan Amendment will also be analyzed. The following probable environmental effects of the project and any required mitigation measures will be evaluated in the EIR:

- **Aesthetics:** The EIR will describe the aesthetic and urban design implications of the proposed Focus Area, including its visual relationships to the surrounding vicinity and the potential impacts of Focus Area development (e.g., the proposed array of building masses, heights, view corridors) on important surrounding public vantage points.
- **Air Quality:** The EIR will describe the potential short- and long-term impacts of Focus Area development capacity on local and regional air quality based on methodologies defined by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD).
- **Biological Resources:** The EIR will evaluate potential impacts on biological resources resulting from Focus Area implementation, including potential impacts on nesting birds.
- **Cultural, Historic, and Tribal Cultural Resources:** The EIR will describe any potential Focus Area impacts and mitigation needs associated with historic and cultural resources. The EIR also will determine whether the project would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, as defined in Public Resources Code section 21074.
- **Energy:** The EIR will evaluate whether project would result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation. Any conflicts with State or local plans for renewable energy and energy efficiency will also be described.
- **Geology and Soils:** The EIR will describe the potential geotechnical implications of Focus Area implementation.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** The EIR will describe the potential Focus Area impacts on local greenhouse gas emissions and global climate change (including sea level rise), following the latest approach and methodologies recommended by State and regional agencies.
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** The EIR will describe any hazardous material activities anticipated in the Plan Area and will describe any associated potential impacts and mitigation needs. The EIR will also analyze potential conflicts with any adopted airport land use plan. Any potential construction period hazards and hazardous material impacts and mitigation needs will also be described.

- **Hydrology and Water Quality:** The EIR will evaluate potential impacts on hydrology and water quality resulting from Focus Area implementation, including possible effects related to drainage and flooding. Focus Area components that address hydrology and water quality also will be described.
- **Land Use and Planning:** The EIR will describe the potential effects of Focus Area implementation on existing and planned land use characteristics in the Focus Area vicinity, including the Focus Area's relationship to other adopted regional and local plans.
- **Noise:** The EIR will describe project-related construction and long-term operation (e.g., traffic, mechanical systems) noise impacts and related mitigation needs.
- **Population and Housing:** The EIR will describe the anticipated effects of Focus Area development capacity on existing and projected population and housing characteristics. This information will be used to forecast public service and utility needs in the Plan Area.
- **Public Services:** The EIR will describe potential impacts on public services (police and fire protection, parks, and schools) and any mitigation needs.
- **Recreation:** The EIR will evaluate whether buildout of the Focus Area would accelerate the physical deterioration of existing parks and/or other recreational facilities as a result of increased use. It will also assess whether the construction of any planned recreational amenities in the Plan Area would have an adverse physical impact on the environment.
- **Transportation:** The EIR transportation analysis will satisfy the requirements of the City and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), including the project's relationship to regional vehicle miles traveled (VMT), transit implications, and effects on pedestrian and bicycle circulation.
- **Utilities and Service Systems:** The EIR will describe potential Focus Area impacts on local utility and service systems, including water supply, water and wastewater treatment, and solid waste and recycling.
- **Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Mineral Resources, and Wildfire:** The EIR will briefly describe why these environmental topics do not apply to the project, based on the Plan Area's location.
- **Alternatives:** Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6, the EIR will identify and compare a reasonable range of alternatives to the Focus Area.



Figure 1. Proposed Freedom Circle focus area. The Greystar property is outlined in yellow.