



**To:** State Agencies  
Responsible Agencies  
Local and Public Agencies  
Trustee Agencies  
Interested Parties

**From:** Ellen Yau, Senior Planner  
City of Mountain View  
Community Development Department  
500 Castro Street, P.O. Box 7540  
Mountain View, CA 94039-7540

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION  
OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR  
THE HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE**

The City of Mountain View proposes to prepare and adopt a comprehensive update to the Housing Element (of the City's General Plan) for the period from January 2023 to January 2031 as required by State law. As part of the Housing Element Update (HEU or the Project), the City will prepare and adopt limited amendments to other elements (or chapters) of the General Plan as needed, and may also adopt limited changes to existing precise plans and the City's zoning map/regulations to maintain consistency with the updated Housing Element. Amendment of the City's General Plan and related actions are discretionary and subject to review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The City will be the Lead Agency and will prepare a program-level Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the above referenced Project. We would like your input regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be addressed in the EIR. The project description, location, and a brief summary of potential environmental effects are attached.

A Public Scoping Meeting will be held on Thursday, February 24, 2022 at 6:00 PM to take comments regarding the scope and content of the Draft EIR. Due to the current COVID-19 restrictions, the scoping meeting will be held virtually via Zoom webinar. Members of the public and public agencies may participate remotely. All interested persons may participate by joining the video conference and may access the meeting information at the following website: <https://www.mvhousingelement.org/event/nop-scoping-meeting>.

According to State law, the deadline for your response is 30 days after receipt of this notice; however, we would appreciate an earlier response if possible. The comment period is from February 4, 2022 to March 7, 2022. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 PM on March 7, 2022.

Please identify a contact person and send your response to:

City of Mountain View  
Community Development Department  
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Ellen Yau, Senior Planner  
Community Development Department



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Date: February 4, 2022

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION  
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THE HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE**

**A. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the EIR is to inform decision makers and the general public of the environmental effects of a proposed project. The EIR process is intended to provide information sufficient to evaluate a proposed project and its potential for significant impacts on the environment; to examine methods of reducing adverse environmental impacts; and to consider alternatives to the project. Upon finding the EIR complete and compliant with CEQA, the City Council will consider certification of the EIR at a public hearing and may take action on the proposed Project. Certification of an EIR does not constitute project approval.

The City of Mountain View determined that analysis of the environmental effects of the Housing Element Update is best provided through use of an EIR. The EIR for the Project will be a program EIR, prepared and processed in accordance with CEQA. Consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, a program EIR is an EIR that is prepared to assess a series of related actions that can be characterized as one project and allows an agency to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures. In this case, the program EIR will assess potential impacts of potential development consistent with the proposed Housing Element Update (HEU). Future discretionary development projects will be evaluated to determine whether they fall within the scope of the program EIR or whether additional CEQA analysis is needed.

**B. PROJECT LOCATION**

The proposed Project would update the City of Mountain View’s Housing Element, which is a policy document that addresses housing issues and applies citywide. The City includes approximately 12.24 square miles and is located in northern Santa Clara County; it borders the San Francisco Bay to the North, the City of Palo Alto to the West, the City of Los Altos to the South and Southwest, and Moffett Federal Airfield and the City of Sunnyvale to the East. (See **Figure 1**)

**C. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT**

The proposed Project includes actions by the City of Mountain View to update the City’s Housing Element in conformance with State law and make necessary adjustments to other elements of the City’s General Plan, zoning, and precise plans to maintain consistency within and between these documents.

**Background**

The Mountain View General Plan contains goals and policies and graphics that guide land use decisions in the City and includes a Housing Element. State law requires local jurisdictions to update their housing elements on a regular schedule and to maintain consistency between the housing element and other elements of the general plan. Each city and county in the Bay Area must update their current housing element to the satisfaction of the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) by January 31, 2023 and must plan for a number of new housing units referred to as their

Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA).

A RHNA is generally assigned to each jurisdiction by the Association of Bay Area Government Council of Governments (ABAG) for an eight year planning period and includes housing units at various level of affordability (very low income, low income, moderate income, and above moderate). The City’s RHNA is shown in **Table 1**, below, and represents a significant increase over the City’s last RHNA of 2,926 units.

<b>Table 1. Mountain View Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)</b>					
	<b>Units by Income Group</b>				<b>Total Units</b>
	<b>Very Low Income (0-50% of AMI)</b>	<b>Low Income (51-80% of AMI)</b>	<b>Moderate Income (81-120% of AMI)</b>	<b>Above Moderate Income (&gt;120% of AMI)</b>	
RHNA Allocation	2,773	1,597	1,885	4,880	11,135
% of Total	25%	14%	17%	44%	100%
<p>Notes:</p> <p>AMI = Area Median Income. Santa Clara County’s 2021 AMI for a household of four was \$151,300 according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Office of Policy Development and Research.</p>					

Source: *ABAG Final Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Plan: San Francisco Bay Area 2023-2031*, December 2021.

Recent modifications to Housing Element law adopted through Senate Bill 1333, known as the “No Net Loss” provisions, require that the City maintain adequate capacity to accommodate the remaining unmet portion of its RHNA target for each of the income categories throughout the eight-year Housing Element planning period. HCD recommends that jurisdictions plan for their RHNA *plus* a buffer of additional units equivalent to 15-30 percent. To be conservative, the City intends to identify a buffer of at least 20 to 30 percent of lower and moderate income units (about 1,500 to 1,900 units) and at least 50 percent of above-moderate income units (at least 2,500 units), for a total buffer of at least 35 percent and a total unit capacity of at least 15,000 and potentially up to approximately 18,000 units. Inclusion of a generous buffer is in the City’s interest because:

- As the analysis of the Housing Element Update progresses through the preparation and adoption process, sites may be modified or removed from the inventory; and
- It would avoid the need to identify and potentially rezone additional sites if one or more sites included in the Housing Element to accommodate lower or moderate income housing later develops with fewer such units during the eight year planning period.

## Components of the Project

The Project analyzed in the EIR would update the City's Housing Element, including goals, objectives, policies, and implementation programs that address the maintenance, preservation, improvement, and development of housing in the City. In addition, the HEU would include an inventory of sites appropriate for the development of multifamily housing, and sufficient to accommodate the City's RHNA plus a buffer. The City would rezone identified sites only if/as necessary to meet requirements of State law and would amend other elements of the General Plan if/as needed to maintain internal consistency.

The HEU is the subject of ongoing community outreach and will evolve based on community input and analysis before being submitted to HCD for review and before being considered for adoption by the City Council. Given the time needed to prepare an EIR, certain assumptions are being made about the contents of the HEU in order to initiate the environmental review process. Specifically, the EIR will analyze a HEU that would meet all legal requirements and:

- Include an updated housing needs assessment;
- Include updated goals, policies, and programs that address the maintenance, preservation, improvement, and development of housing and affirmatively further fair housing;
- Include a housing inventory that meets the City's RHNA and provides a buffer of additional housing development capacity;
- Require limited amendments to other elements of the General Plan as/if needed to maintain internal consistency; and
- Require limited amendments to the City's existing precise plans, zoning map and zoning ordinance to rezone housing site(s) and densities if/as needed.

## Housing Sites Inventory

The City proposes to address the requirements for a housing inventory and meet its RHNA plus a buffer via a number of strategies as provided for in State law and HCD guidance.

Pipeline Projects. The City has approved a number of housing and mixed-use projects that are likely to result in production of multifamily housing during the housing element planning period. The City also has active applications on file for multifamily housing and/or mixed use developments that may be approved during the housing element planning period. Both types of "pipeline projects" would count towards the City's RHNA, and could collectively total approximately 8,000 units by 2031.

Rehabilitation and Preservation of Existing Units for Lower Income Households. The City may meet a portion of its RHNA by providing committed assistance to substantially rehabilitate existing housing units to provide for lower income housing. The City is investigating possible use of this strategy and does not yet have an estimate of the number of units involved.

Accessory Dwelling Units. The City may assume that the development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) during the planning period is equivalent to that in recent years. Based on information contained in the City's annual production reports to HCD, approximately 96 ADUs may be assumed over the eight year planning period.

Existing Opportunity Sites. The City's existing precise plans, General Plan Land Use designations,

and zoning permit a range of residential densities in different areas of the City that can accommodate development of multifamily housing without adjustment. A preliminary analysis estimates that there may be sufficient sites to accommodate approximately 5,000 to 6,000 units. Most of these sites are within Precise Plan areas, including El Camino Real, San Antonio, and East Whisman, although there could be existing sites identified for inclusion in the inventory in other areas of the City as well. See **Figure 2** for a map showing City neighborhoods and precise plan locations.

Opportunity Sites Requiring Rezoning. There are a limited number of sites that could accommodate multiunit housing – and in some cases specifically affordable housing for lower income households – if rezoned to allow residential use at appropriate densities. These sites, which include development projects under review and under discussion are located at 901-987 North Rengstorff Avenue, 1265 Montecito Avenue, 1020 Terra Bella Avenue and East Evelyn Avenue between Highway 85 and Pioneer Way, and could accommodate approximately 700 units.

Other Opportunities. The City fields questions about many development sites consistent with existing zoning. Several of these sites have specific developer interest, but for which no application has yet been submitted. These development opportunities are generally located in Precise Plan areas, such as East Whisman, North Bayshore and El Camino Real, and could accommodate at least 1,500 units.

Additional Rezonings. If the above opportunities are inadequate to accommodate the RHNA, either at the time of Housing Element adoption or over the course of the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle due to the “no net loss” law, the Housing Element may also include programs to adopt additional rezonings in targeted urban infill areas (areas on previously developed sites and/or completely surrounded by urban uses), such as the following:

- General Plan Densities. Sites throughout the city allow residential or higher densities through the General Plan, but have not yet implemented the zoning for these uses and densities.
- Other Opportunity Sites. Several other sites may present unique residential development opportunities.

These rezoning opportunities could accommodate approximately 1,000 to 2,500 additional units.

Total Inventory. While strategies and sites included in the Housing Element Update will be refined based on community input and analysis as the EIR is being prepared, the EIR will analyze the impacts associated with the possible increase in housing production assuming use of the above strategies to plan for up to approximately 18,000 units focused primarily along the commercial corridors and in areas that currently accommodate commercial/industrial uses, mixed uses, and/or multifamily housing. An interactive map of the City showing potential housing inventory sites can be accessed on the City’s website at <https://www.mvhousingelement.org/>.

It is important to note that while State law requires the Housing Element to include an inventory of housing sites and requires the City to appropriately zone sites for multifamily housing, the City is not required to actually develop/construct housing on these sites. Future development on identified sites will continue to be at the discretion of individual property owners and will be largely dependent on market forces and in the case of affordable housing, available funding and/or other incentives.

## **Project Objectives**

The proposed Project is intended to ensure the City's conformance with State housing requirements and seeks to:

- Protect existing housing;
- Encourage new housing for households at all income levels and for households with a range of diverse housing needs;
- Remove undue constraints on new housing development, including for affordable housing development;
- Affirmatively further fair housing; and
- Identify specific sites that could accommodate required housing units to meet the City's RHNA.

## **D. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT**

The City will prepare a program EIR to assess potential impacts of the proposed Housing Element Update, focusing on projected growth that may occur as a result of proposed changes in density/zoning or adoption of other incentives. Pursuant to CEQA and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064, the discussion of potential effects on the environment in the EIR shall be focused on those impacts that the City has determined may be potentially significant. The EIR will also evaluate the cumulative impacts of the Project. The City expects that the EIR will address potential environmental effects of the Project in the following areas:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology/Soils and Paleontological Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Land Use
- Noise
- Population/Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems

## **E. SCOPING COMMENTS**

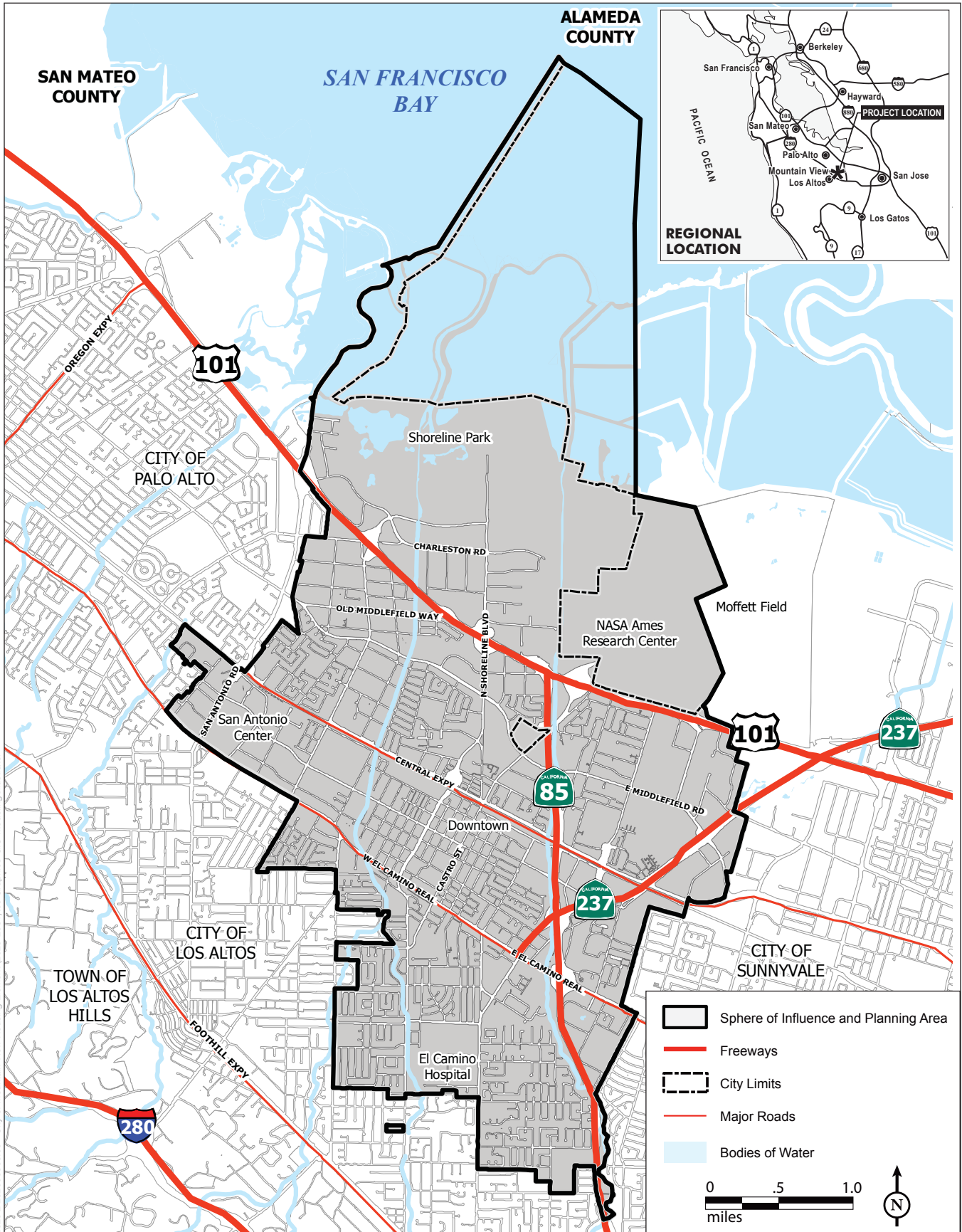
We are requesting your input on the scope and content of the environmental information appropriate to your agency's statutory responsibilities or of interest to your organization; specifically, we are requesting the following:

1. Identify significant environmental effects and/or mitigation measures you believe need to be explored in the EIR with supporting discussion of why you believe effects may be significant.
2. Describe special studies and other information you believe are necessary for the City to analyze the significant environmental effects, alternatives, and mitigation measures you have identified.

3. For public agencies that provide infrastructure and public services, identify any facilities that will be required to provide services to the Project development.
4. Indicate whether staff from your agency would like to meet with City staff to discuss the scope and content of the EIR's environmental information;
5. Provide the name, title, telephone number, postal address, and email address of the contact person from your agency or organization that we can contact regarding your comments; and
6. Identify alternatives you believe need to be explored in further detail in the EIR.

Comments may be sent to: Ellen Yau, Senior Planner  
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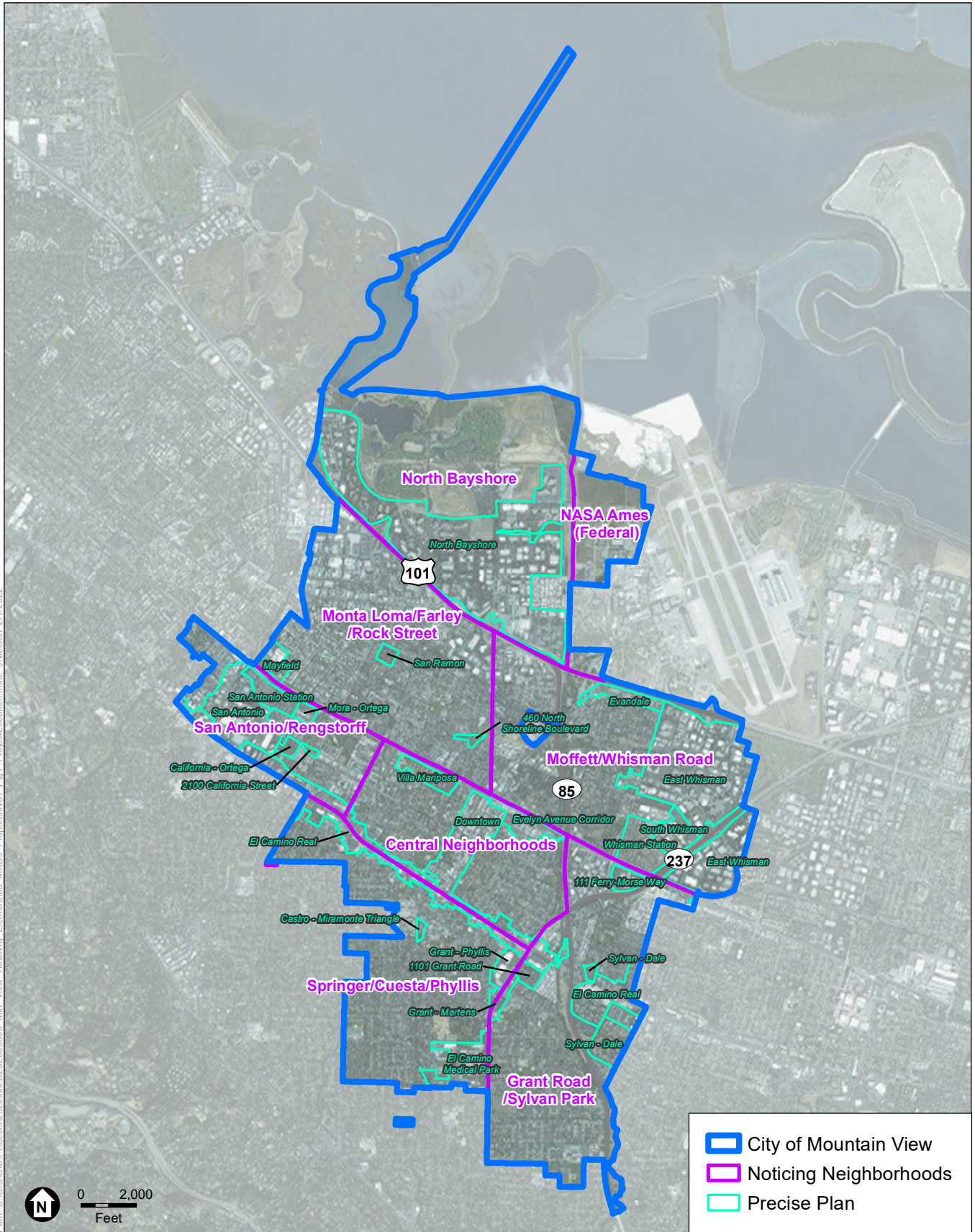
202012020000806:00 - City of Mountain View Housing Element (2023-2031)05 Graphics-GIS-Modeling/Illustrator

SOURCE: City of Mountain View, 2011

City of Mountain View Housing Element Update

**Figure 1**  
Project Location Map





SOURCE: ESRI, 2021.

City of Mountain View Housing Element Update

**Figure 2**  
 Neighborhoods and Precise Plan Locations

