Executive Summary

Project Title:	Ravenswood Business District/Four Corners Specific Plan Update Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR)
SCH#:	2022040352
Lead Agency:	City of East Palo Alto
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Project Location:	City of East Palo Alto, San Mateo Count

The City of East Palo Alto, as the Lead Agency, has prepared this Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for the Ravenswood/4 Corners Transit-Oriented Development Specific Plan Update (Specific Plan Update) in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines.

As the CEQA Lead Agency for this Specific Plan Update, the City of East Palo Alto is required to consider the information in this Draft SEIR along with any other available information in deciding whether to approve the Specific Plan Update. The basic requirements for an EIR include discussions of the environmental setting, significant environmental impacts including growth-inducing impacts, cumulative impacts, mitigation measures, and alternatives. It is not the intent of an EIR to recommend either approval or denial of a project.

Summary of the Project Location and Description

The City adopted the existing Ravenswood Specific Plan in 2013 (2013 Specific Plan). This plan provides a policy and regulatory framework for reviewing development projects and public improvements in the Specific Plan area. The 2013 Specific Plan allows for development of up to 1.3 million square feet of office/R&D uses, 175,820 square feet of industrial uses, 112,400 square feet of retail uses, 36,000 square feet of civic/community uses, and 835 housing units (comprised of 816 multifamily and 19 single-family units). The 2013 Specific Plan assumed there would be a loop road with a multi-use path that would be located along the perimeter of the northern portion of University Village (immediately to the west of the Specific Plan area) and extend from the existing terminus of Demeter Street to connect with University Avenue. As currently envisioned, the loop road configuration would be a 76-foot right of way along the northern perimeter and 56-foot right of way along the western perimeter and would include two travel lanes, along with a 14-foot wide multi-use path and associated shoulders and buffers. The loop road would provide a direct route between the Specific Plan area and University Avenue, avoiding the need to use Bay Road. The loop

road could also be used for emergency evacuation, in accordance with state requirements, and provide emergency vehicle access.

An update to the Specific Plan (Specific Plan Update) is proposed and would increase the total amount of development allowed within the Specific Plan area by increasing the maximum square footages for office, R&D/life science, light industrial, civic/community, and tenant amenity, and the total number of residential units allowed under the Specific Plan.

The Specific Plan Update would be implemented as one of two development scenarios, both of which are evaluated in the SEIR:

- Scenario 1 would consist of an additional 1,802,950 square feet of office space, 988,400 square feet of R&D space, 250,000 square feet of industrial space, 129,700 square feet of civic space, 114,400 square feet of retail space, 43,870 square feet of tenant amenity space, and 1,350 residential units.
- Scenario 2 would consist of an additional 2,135,100 square feet of office space, 1,167,250 square feet of R&D space, 300,000 square feet of industrial space, 129,700 square feet of civic space, 114,400 square feet of retail space, 53,500 square feet of tenant amenity space, and 1,350 residential units.

In addition, the Specific Plan Update proposes a multi-use path along the northern and eastern perimeter of the Specific Plan area with an option to have a loop road and an option without the loop road. The multi-use path and loop road would continue to be located and function as discussed above under the 2013 Specific Plan. Refer to Section 2.0 of this Draft SEIR for a further description of the Specific Plan Update.

Summary of Significant Impacts

The SEIR includes a detailed discussion of the existing setting, impacts, and Specific Plan policies proposed to protect environmental resources and avoid and/or reduce impacts. The analysis in the Final SEIR concluded that the implementation of the Specific Plan Update would result in significant and avoidable impacts from 1) operational criteria air pollutant emissions and greenhouse gas emissions as follows:

- **Impact AIR-2:** The Specific Plan Update would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard. **(Significant and Unavoidable Impact)**

- **Impact AIR-C:** The project would result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant cumulative air quality impact. **(Significant and Unavoidable Cumulative Impact)**

- Impact GHG-1: The project would generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment. **(Significant and Unavoidable Impact)**

- Impact GHG-2: The project would conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs. **(Significant and Unavoidable Impact)**

- Impact GHG-C: The project would result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant cumulative GHG emissions impact. **(Significant and Unavoidable Cumulative Impact)**

The Specific Plan Update includes the following standards and policies to reduce operational criteria air pollutant emissions from buildout of the Plan Update:

Proposed Specific Plan Update 8-4.1: General TDM Requirements

- **Standard 1: 40 percent Trip Reduction Requirement.** Per the City's TDM ordinance, the daily trips generated by new developments in the Plan Area are required to be 40 percent below trip estimates developed based on rates published in the Institute of Transportation Engineers' (ITE) Trip Generation Manual, 11th Edition.

- **Standard 2: Combined Office and R&D Trip Rates.** The same average daily trip rate of 10.96 vehicle trips/1,000 square feet will be assumed for all uses in this employment category, since the Plan allows for flexibility in the mix of general office space, research and development space, and life science space, and because these uses have similar vehicle trip characteristics.

Proposed Specific Plan Update 8-4.3 Required TDM Elements

- **1. Shuttle Program:** he TMA may fund and/or operate a shuttle program that connects employees and residents with nearby commercial, transit, and employment centers and provides long-haul service to housing and employment centers in other communities. If the TMA operates a shuttle program, future projects will be expected to participate in the shuttle program to achieve the required 40 percent trip reduction required by the City's TDM ordinance. Future projects could alternatively implement other TDM elements to achieve the 40 percent trip reduction requirement.

Proposed Specific Plan Update Policy

- **Policy LU-4.9**: All diesel stand by emergency generators shall meet U.S. EPA Tier 4 engine standards. Permanent stationary emergency generators installed on-site shall have engines that meet or exceed U.S. EPA Tier 4 standards for particulate matter emissions, and shall obtain appropriate permits to operate from BAAQMD, as applicable.

The Specific Plan Update includes the following standards to reduce its significant GHG emissions:

Proposed Specific Plan Update 8.4.2 Off-Street Parking Management Strategies

- **Standard 5. Electric Vehicle (EV)**. EV parking for all developments shall be provided in accordance with CalGreen Tier 2 guidelines. As an incentive for EV adoption, parking spaces for EVs should be designated, time limited and marked as reserved in prominent and convenient locations. Electric vehicle spaces shall count toward the total parking supply and parking maximum.

Proposed Specific Plan Update Section 6.8.1 Green Building

- **Standard 2 Solid Waste**. All future developments shall implement the state's and City's solid waste minimization standards to increase the rates of recycling and composting of food, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Summary of Alternatives to the Proposed Project

CEQA requires that an EIR identify alternatives to a project as it is proposed. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 specifies that an EIR should identify alternatives which "would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project." Below is a summary of the project alternatives analyzed in this Draft SEIR. A full analysis of the project alternatives is provided in Section 7.0 Alternatives.

Alternatives Considered but Rejected

The following alternatives were considered but rejected and described in detail in Section 7.3.1.

- Location Alternative
    - A Location Alternative would need to be at least of comparable size and have the potential to accommodate similar uses as the Specific Plan area (approximately 207 acres) within the City of East Palo Alto. There are no alternative locations within the City that meets this criteria.

Analyzed Alternatives

The following alternatives were evaluated as alternatives to the project and described in detail in Section 7.3.2.

- No Project/No New Development Alternative (assumes the Specific Plan is repealed and the Specific Plan area remains as it is today)
- No Project/Adopted Specific Plan Alternative (assumes the 2013 Specific Plan would remain the planning document for the Specific Plan area)
- Reduced Scale Alternative (assumes a 40 percent reduction of future development assumed under the Specific Plan Update, Scenario 2 – the most intensive scenario)

Known Views of Local Groups and Areas of Controversy

Known Views of Local Groups and Areas of Controversy Environmental concerns from local residents, property owners, organizations, and/or agencies about the project related to:

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Aircraft Noise
- Transportation