



NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

TO: State Clearinghouse, Responsible & Trustee Agencies, and Other Interested Parties

DATE: September 2, 2022

SUBJECT: **Notice of Preparation of Environmental Impact Report (EIR)**
Notice of EIR Scoping Meeting on Monday, September 26, 2022

LEAD AGENCY: City of East Palo Alto

PROJECT TITLE: Four Corners

PROJECT AREA: City of East Palo Alto, Ravenswood Business District

The City of East Palo Alto, as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Four Corners Project. The project, its location, and potential environmental effects are described below.

The City of East Palo Alto is soliciting input from responsible and trustee agencies, the State Office of Planning and Research, and extending the early consultation process to members of the public, organizations, and any other interested parties as to the scope and content of the information to be included and analyzed in the project's EIR. Agencies should comment on the elements of the environmental information that are relevant to their statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. The EIR will serve as the environmental document for responsible and trustee agencies when considering any discretionary approvals or permits within their jurisdiction.

We would appreciate your response at the earliest possible date. This NOP will be circulated for a 30-day review period, from September 2 to October 3, 2022. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than the close of the 30-day NOP review period. The comment period closes at **5:00 pm on Monday, October 3, 2022**. Please send your written/typed comments (including a name and contact information) to Christopher Dacumos, Contract Project Planner, with the subject "1675 Bay Road – Four Corners Project EIR" at the physical address or email address shown below. Public agencies providing comments are requested to include a contact person for the agency.

Lead Agency Contact

Christopher Dacumos, Consultant Senior Planner
City of East Palo Alto
Community and Economic Development Department
1960 Tate Street
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
Email: cdacumos@cityofepa.org

A digital copy of this NOP and additional detail about the project can be viewed at:

<https://www.cityofepa.org/planning/project/1675-bay-road-four-corners-dr20-018>

An EIR scoping meeting will be held by the Planning Commission at a regularly scheduled meeting on:

September 26, 2022, at 7PM

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this meeting will be held virtually. Members of the public and public agencies may participate remotely. For access information, please see page 5 below.

Project Location

The 6.1-acre project site is on East Palo Alto's north side, located at 1675 Bay Road on the northeast intersection of University Avenue and Bay Road. The site is located on one irregularly shaped parcel (Accessor Parcel Number [APN] 063-111-250) and bounded by University Avenue to the west, Bay Road to the south, and single-family residential neighborhoods to the east and north along Michigan Avenue and Fordham Street. A parcel, owned by the City of East Palo Alto abuts the western corner of the project site. This rectangular 10,000 square-foot City owned parcel is not part of the project. The project is within the city limits of East Palo Alto, San Mateo County, CA. See **Figure 1, Project Location**.

Existing Conditions

The property is currently vacant, consisting of an open lot with regularly maintained grassy vegetation and 28 existing trees. Metal fencing currently surrounds the property boundaries. Surrounding land uses are urban and primarily residential, with some local serving neighborhood commercial. The City of East Palo Alto City Hall, library, and San Mateo County government services center are located immediately across University Avenue.

The project site has a General Plan land use designation of Mixed-Use High (MUH). The site is located within the Ravenswood/4 Corners Specific Plan area and is zoned "4 Corners Gateway".

Project Description Summary

The project applicant, Sand Hill Property Company, is proposing to develop a mixed-use project on the 6.1-acre parcel located at 1675 Bay Road. The development includes up to 40,000 square feet of retail, restaurants, and community space, 180 units of mixed-income housing, and 500,000 square feet of employment uses (e.g., life science/laboratory and research space).

The center of the site would be developed with a new public “town square” that would serve as a central public plaza. The town square would be surrounded by two eight-story life science/laboratory and research buildings 132 feet in height, not including the mechanical screening, in the northern portion of the site. These two buildings would be connected by external pedestrian bridges from floors three through eight. The portions of the life science/laboratory and research buildings immediately adjacent to the town square would be developed with ground-floor retail, restaurants, and community uses.

The eastern corner of the site would be developed with a seven-story parking garage at 65 feet in height, incorporating vegetative screening with vertical plantings. The two buildings at the southern corner of the site would be up to eight stories in height and provide up to 180 units of mixed-income housing with ground-floor retail and amenity spaces.

A building to the immediate west of the town square is proposed as a potential community-oriented building providing space to the City, local community groups, or other public agencies.

The applicant is seeking Design Review. To allow the proposed uses Administrative Use Permits (AUP) and a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) must be approved by the City of East Palo Alto City Council to entitle the project, as well as approval for a Vesting Tentative Tract Map to subdivide the parcel. The applicant is also requesting a tree removal permit to remove certain protected trees. The following table describes the uses sought through AUP or CUP:

Uses Sought	RBD SP - Four Corners
Research and Development (for life science / laboratory and research uses)	X
Cultural Institutions	AUP
Park / Plaza / Open Space	P
Public Assembly / Meeting Facilities	AUP
Eating and Drinking Establishments	Alcohol - CUP; Fast Service Restaurant - AUP; Full Service Restaurant - P

Under the existing adopted 2013 Ravenswood/ Four Corners TOD (RBD) Specific Plan the applicable zoning district is 4 Corners Gateway, which prohibits Research Laboratories and has a maximum height allowance of six stories above grade, plus an additional 15 feet for equipment and elevator penthouses.

Through the Vista 2035 East Palo Alto General Plan, which was adopted in 2016, the project location has a General Plan land use designation of Mixed Use High which allows for multifamily residential, single family residential, retail, services, office, and R&D uses. Additionally, the General Plan allows up to 86 units/acre and up to a 2.5 floor-to-area ratio (FAR) with a maximum height of 8 stories or 100 feet, whichever is greater.

The applicant therefore also requests to amend the 2013 RBD Specific Plan and Zoning Maps to permit life science/laboratory and research uses and allow seven- and eight-story buildings on the project site.

While this project is being reviewed, the City has concurrently undertaken a process to consider updating the RBD Specific Plan which may incorporate the applicant's requested changes to the zoning district for the project site to allow for life science/laboratory and research uses and eight-story buildings. Information on the RBD Update can be found here: <https://www.cityofepa.org/planning/page/ravenswood-business-district-4-corners-specific-plan-update>.

Probable Environmental Effects

The City of East Palo Alto will be preparing an environmental impact report (EIR) that evaluates potential environmental effects consistent with CEQA Statutes and Guidelines. An initial study is not required to determine that an EIR will be prepared, and as such, an initial study was not prepared for the proposed project. The EIR will discuss potential environmental impacts of the proposed project, including potential construction and operational effects. The City has identified several environmental areas where impacts are most likely to occur. These impact areas include:

- Aesthetics (including visual changes and community character)
- Air Quality (including an assessment of health risk)
- Biological Resources
- Cultural, Tribal and Historic Resources
- Energy Demands
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning (including consistency with Ravenswood/ Four Corners TOD Specific Plan)
- Noise and Vibration
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation and Circulation (including vehicle miles travelled)

- Utilities and Service Systems (including water supply and demand/system capacity)

The EIR will also evaluate a range of feasible alternatives to the project, as well as other required discussions including: (a) any significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the project is implemented; (b) any significant irreversible and irretrievable commitments to resources; (c) growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project; (d) effects found not to be significant; and (e) cumulative impacts.

A digital copy of this NOP and additional detail about the project can be viewed at:

<https://www.cityofepa.org/planning/project/1675-bay-road-four-corners-dr20-018>

Public Scoping Meeting

This scoping session will be an agenda item of a scheduled session of the Planning Commission on Monday, September 26, 2022. The City Council for the City of East Palo Alto has adopted a resolution making the AB 361 findings necessary to continue virtual public meetings for the City Council and City Advisory Bodies During the COVID-19 State of Emergency. To reduce the spread of Covid-19, this meeting will be held by virtual teleconference/video conference only.

Members of the public and public agencies are invited to view and participate in this virtual gathering to provide comments regarding the scope and content of the EIR. Members of the public can find information and may provide comments by signing up on the City's meeting page at <http://eastpaloalto.iqm2.com/Citizens/Default.aspx> or by attending the meeting live via Zoom and using the "RAISE HAND" feature when the Chair or Planning Clerk calls for public comment. Project questions and comments can also be sent to the contact information listed above.

The **Monday, September 26, 2022** virtual Planning Commission meeting will be held online at 7:00 pm and can be accessed via the Zoom meeting link listed below. In addition, an agenda packet, which includes meeting links, will be available no later than the Friday before the meeting date at the following:

http://eastpaloalto.iqm2.com/Citizens/Detail_Meeting.aspx?ID=1049. Members of the public may provide comments by email to rbd@cityofepa.org.

Members of the public may provide comments by email to cdacumos@cityofepa.org or mailed or personally delivered to the City at

ATTN: Chris Dacumos
1960 Tate Street
East Palo Alto, CA 94303

Written comments fewer than 250 words received by 4:00pm on September 26, 2022 will be read to the Planning Commission. Any written comments received after the 4:00 p.m. deadline that are not read into the record and comments that are more than 250 words will be provided to the Planning Commission and will be included in the project record for the preparation of the EIR. Verbal comments provided during the Public Scoping Meeting shall be limited to two minutes.

Members of the public may view the meeting by:

- 1) viewing the City's live broadcast accessed through <http://eastpaloalto.iqm2.com/Citizens/Default.aspx>
- 2) tuning to Channel 29 (local television);
- 3) going to <https://midpenmedia.org/local-tv/watch-now/>;
- 4) going to the City Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/CityOfEastPaloAlto>;
- 5) joining the meeting via Zoom from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device at <https://zoom.us/s/264253019> Meeting ID: 264 253 019; or
- 6) dialing +1 669 900 6833 (San Jose) and entering Meeting ID: 264 253 019.

For further information regarding this meeting, contact the City of East Palo Alto Planning Division, (650) 853-3189. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires reasonable accommodation and access for the physically challenged. Those requesting such accommodation should contact the Planning Commission Secretary at (650) 853-3189 four days before the hearing date.

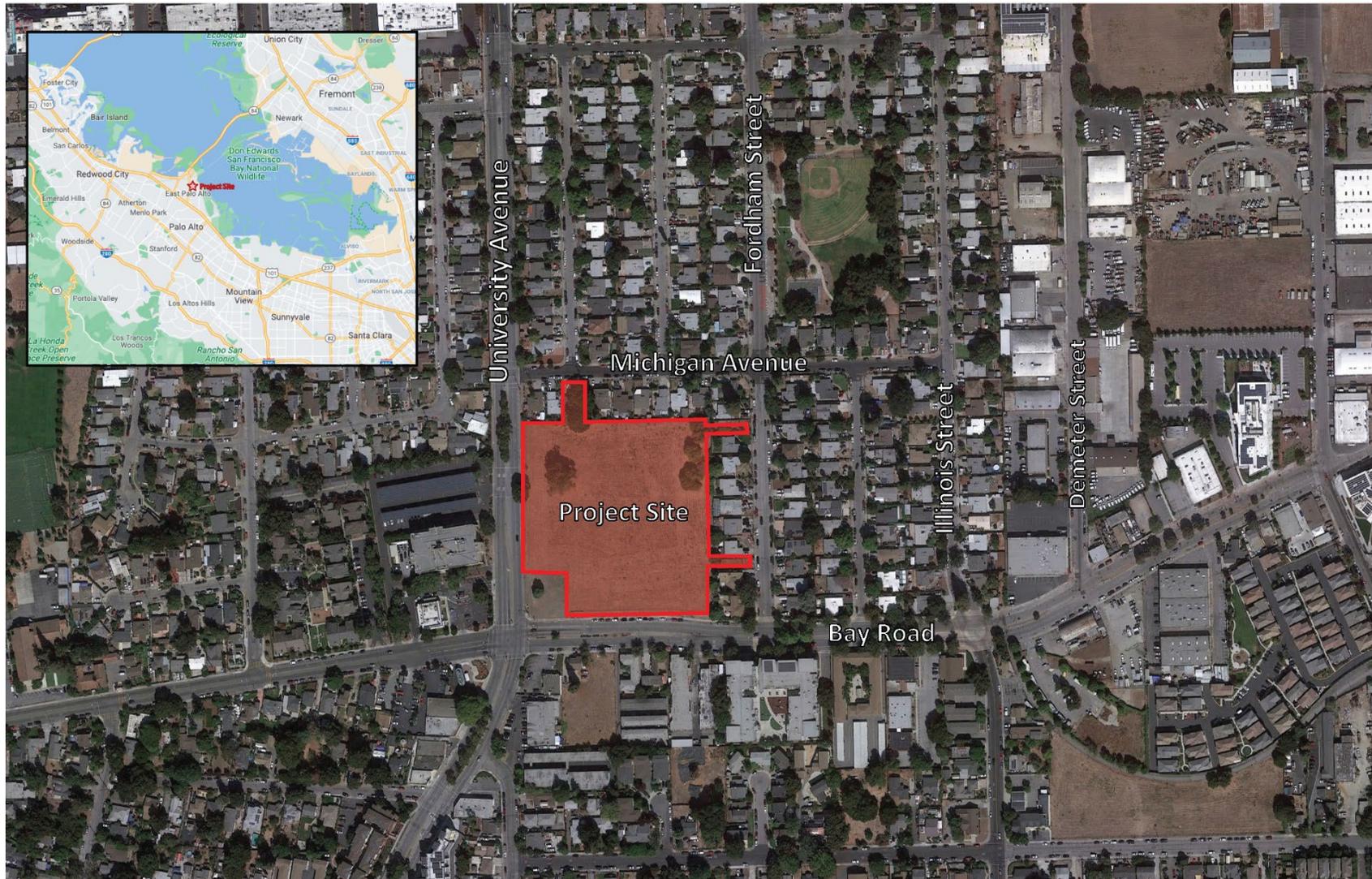
ALL INTERESTED PARTIES ARE INVITED TO SUMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS ON THE SCOPE OF THE EIR TO ASSIST IN IDENTIFYING ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED.

For additional information, please contact Christopher Dacumos, Contract Project Planner, at cdacumos@cityofepa.org, or (650) 853-3159.

Lead Agency Authorization

Date: September 2, 2022
Name: Elena Lee
Title: Planning Manager
Agency: City of East Palo Alto

Figure 1: Project Location



Source: Google Earth, 2020