



**City of
Santa Clara**
The Center of What's Possible

NOTICE

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING Distribution Date: 1/17/2025

As authorized by the City of Santa Clara as a Lead Agency, the City hereby provides a **30-day public review period** for a Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Project title: El Camino Real Specific Plan
Location: Approximately 316 acres of properties located immediately adjacent to the segment of the El Camino Real between Lafayette Street on the east and the City limits on the west.
Applicant: City of Santa Clara
Owner: Various
Request: A Draft EIR for the project was previously considered for adoption in 2021. The City Council did not take action on the Specific Plan and the EIR was not certified. The City Council directed City staff to modify the plan to reduce residential density and maximum building heights. The Land Use Plan has been revised to be consistent with existing/recently approved entitlements, reflect a 4,400 residential unit capacity, and reduced density along sensitive interfaces. In addition, a new, low-density land use designation for townhome development was created. The new land use designation, *Corridor Residential – Low*, would allow for a density of 12 to 25 dwelling units per acre (du/acre) and a maximum of height of three stories. Approximately 60 parcels that were previously designated *Corridor Residential* (26 to 45 du/acre, four stories) would be redesignated as *Corridor Residential – Low*. The proposed Specific Plan would reduce the existing commercial space by approximately 289,000 square feet.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the City of Santa Clara as the Lead Agency seeks the views of responsible agencies and the public as to the scope and content of the environmental information that should be considered for inclusion in the project EIR for the proposed project. The project description, location, and potential environmental effects are contained in the materials provided in the form of a Notice of Preparation (NOP). The NOP is available from the Planning Division at the address below and online at the City's website: www.santaclaraca.gov/CEQA.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Comments may be filed with the City in response to the NOP within the **30-day** review period between **Friday, January 17, 2025 and Tuesday, February 18, 2025**, pursuant to Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines. Written comments for the project EIR scope and content will be accepted if they are received by **5:00 PM on Tuesday, February 18, 2025** to:

Lead Agency: City of Santa Clara, Community Development Department, Planning Division
Contact: Rebecca Bustos, RBustos@santaclaraca.gov
1500 Warburton Avenue, Santa Clara, CA 95050
Phone: (408) 615-2450



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NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

In addition to providing written notice, you may attend the **virtual** Scoping Meeting that is scheduled for **Thursday, January 30, 2025 from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM.**

Meeting Details:

Zoom Webinar

<https://santaclaraca.zoom.us/j/88535837836>

Webinar ID: 885 3583 7836

This session includes a presentation on the project description and will provide an opportunity for agencies and the public to identify issues that they wish to see addressed in the EIR analysis. The NOTICE on the back provides additional details.

Notice of Preparation

Draft Program Environmental Impact Report

For the El Camino Real Specific Plan

DATE: January 17, 2025

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

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the El Camino Real Specific Plan and Notice of Public Scoping Meeting

LEAD AGENCY: City of Santa Clara
Community Development Department, Planning Division
1500 Warburton Avenue
Santa Clara, California 95050

CONTACT: Rebecca Bustos, Principal Planner
1500 Warburton Avenue
Santa Clara, California 95050
RBustos@santaclaraca.gov
Phone: 408-615-2464

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT The City of Santa Clara (lead agency) will prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed El Camino Real Specific Plan (ECR Plan). This Notice of Preparation (NOP) is being distributed to applicable responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and interested parties as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Interested agencies are requested to comment on the project's scope and on the content of the descriptions of the significant environmental issues and reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures to be explored in the Draft EIR. The project location and description are summarized below.

A 30-DAY NOP REVIEW PERIOD: The City solicits comments regarding the scope and content of the Draft EIR from all interested parties requesting notice, responsible agencies, agencies with jurisdiction by law, trustee agencies, and involved agencies. In accordance with the time limits established by CEQA, the NOP public review period will **begin on January 17, 2025, and end on February 18, 2025**. Please send your written/typed comments (including name, telephone number, and contact information) by **5:00 p.m. on February 18, 2025** to:

Email: Rbustos@SantaClaraCA.gov

OR

Mail: City of Santa Clara – Community Development Department
Attn: Rebecca Bustos, Principal Planner
1500 Warburton Avenue
Santa Clara, California 95050

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING: The City will hold a virtual Scoping Meeting to: 1) inform the public and interested agencies about the proposed project; and 2) solicit public comment on the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the Program EIR as well as the range of practicable alternatives to be evaluated. The date, time and place of the meeting are as follows:

January 30, 2025
6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Zoom Webinar

<https://santaclaraca.zoom.us/j/88535837836>

Webinar ID: 885 3583 7836

PROJECT RELATED DOCUMENTS: Project related documents, including this NOP, can be found on the project webpage:

<https://www.santaclaraca.gov/our-city/departments-a-f/community-development/planning-division/specific-plans/el-camino-real-specific-plan-revision>

PROJECT LOCATION: Santa Clara is in northwest Santa Clara County in an area commonly referred to as the South Bay or Silicon Valley. Santa Clara is surrounded by the City of Sunnyvale to the west, the City of San José to the south and east, and the San Francisco Bay to the north. Regional access to Santa Clara is via Interstate 280 to the south and US Highway 101 to the north. The El Camino Real (ECR) Specific Plan project area is comprised of approximately 316 acres of properties that are located immediately adjacent to the segment of the El Camino Real between Lafayette Street on the east and the City limits on the west. The project location is shown in Figure 1.

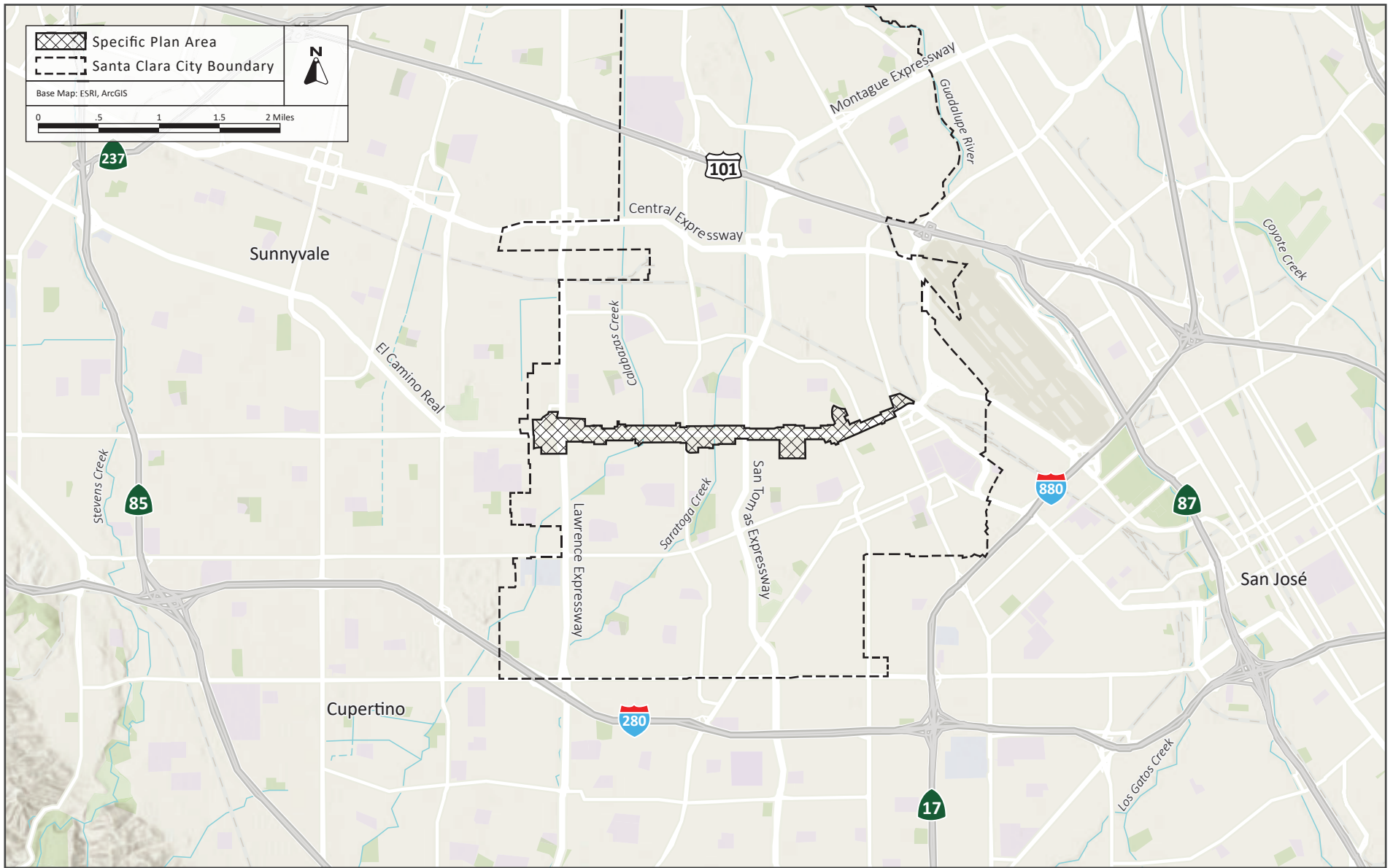
PROJECT BACKGROUND: Development along El Camino Real is currently comprised of a mix of small-scale auto-oriented commercial uses and services, mid- to large-scale strip mall developments, and multi-family residential buildings. The City of Santa Clara 2010-2035 General Plan, adopted November 2010, envisions transforming the El Camino Real corridor from a series of automobile-oriented strip malls to a tree-lined, pedestrian- and transit-oriented corridor with a mix of residential and retail uses. The Specific Plan will provide guidance for the transformation of land uses along the El Camino Real corridor and support a multimodal transportation facility, consistent with the General Plan vision.

Previous Process (2017-2022)

The City of Santa Clara, with support from the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), was provided grant funding to develop a Specific Plan for El Camino Real within Santa Clara. Following a two plus-year community engagement process, the City completed the Specific Plan which was presented to the Santa Clara City Council for adoption on June 15, 2021. The City Council did not take action on the Specific Plan and the EIR was not certified. The Santa Clara City Council directed City staff to modify the plan to reduce residential density and maximum building heights.

Revision Process (2023)

Since then, the Specific Plan has been revised per direction received from City Council. As mentioned above, the previously prepared EIR was not certified; therefore, the revised plan would be subject to a new CEQA process.



ECR PLAN AREA VICINITY MAP

FIGURE 1

PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS: The ECR Specific Plan (project) will build on two supporting plans: 1) the Grand Boulevard Initiative - a regional, multi-jurisdictional effort to transform El Camino into a multi-modal corridor; and 2) the City's 2015-2035 General Plan, which envisions El Camino Real as a tree-lined, pedestrian and transit-oriented corridor with a mix of residential and retail uses.

The purpose of the project is to provide an overall vision and guidance to transform the project area into a vibrant mixed-use corridor with improved streetscapes and safe environments for walking, bicycling, and other modes of transportation, while preserving the quality of life of adjacent neighborhoods and existing assets to the community. The project will refine and implement the General Plan vision of the El Camino Real corridor. The project will address specific plan topics such as land use, transportation, and infrastructure. It will include development policies, goals, and design standards for the El Camino Real corridor. The project would also include recommendations for conceptual modifications to the roadway and streetscape enhancements to enable safer and a greater number of multi-modal transportation options along the generally east-west stretch of El Camino Real through Santa Clara.

The Land Use Plan has been revised to be consistent with existing/recently approved entitlements, reflect a 4,400 residential unit capacity, and reduced density along sensitive interfaces. In addition, a new, low-density land use designation for townhome development was created. The new land use designation, *Corridor Residential – Low*, would allow for a density of 12 to 25 dwelling units per acre (du/acre) and a maximum of height of three stories. Approximately 60 parcels that were previously designated *Corridor Residential* (26 to 45 du/acre, four stories) would be redesignated as *Corridor Residential – Low*. The proposed Specific Plan would reduce the existing commercial space by approximately 289,000 square feet. The proposed and modified land use plans are shown below in Figures 2 and 3, respectively.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The Draft EIR will evaluate potential environmental impacts of the project. The Draft EIR will also propose mitigation to avoid and/or reduce impacts deemed potentially significant, identify reasonable alternatives, and compare the environmental impacts of the alternatives to the project's impacts.

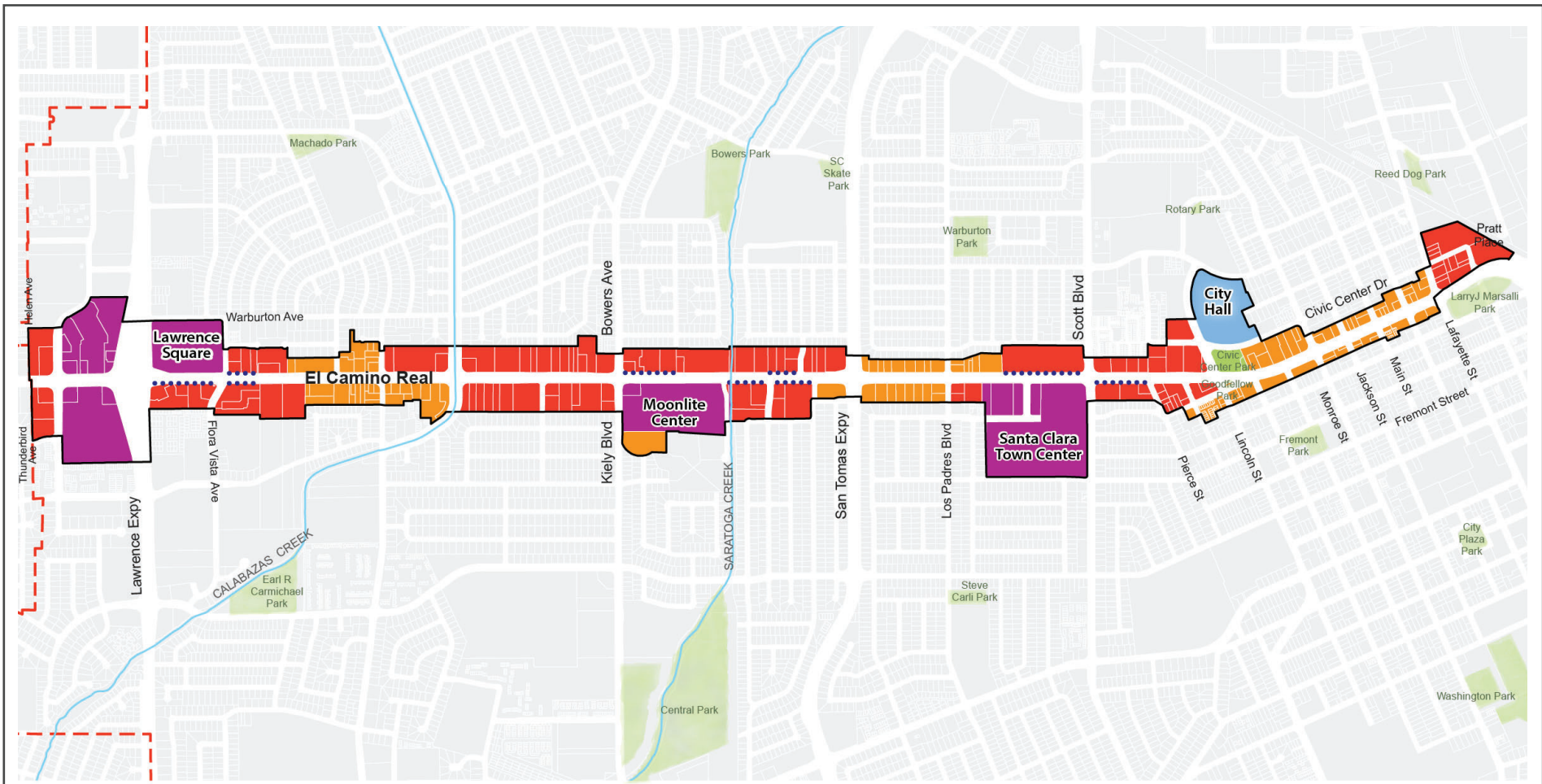
The EIR is intended to be a program-level document that will analyze the broad environmental effects of the project. No specific development projects are being considered. Rather, the analysis will focus on the reasonably foreseeable direct and indirect physical environmental effects that could result from implementation of the land use and policies envisioned for the El Camino Real corridor in the ECR Plan.

In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(a), the City did not prepare an Initial Study, but advises that the EIR will evaluate potentially significant environmental effects related to the following environmental resources:

Aesthetics: The EIR will analyze potential impacts due to changes in building mass, height, and lighting envisioned in the project.

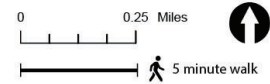
Air Quality: The EIR will address the project's impacts to local and regional air quality in accordance with CEQA and Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) guidelines and thresholds.

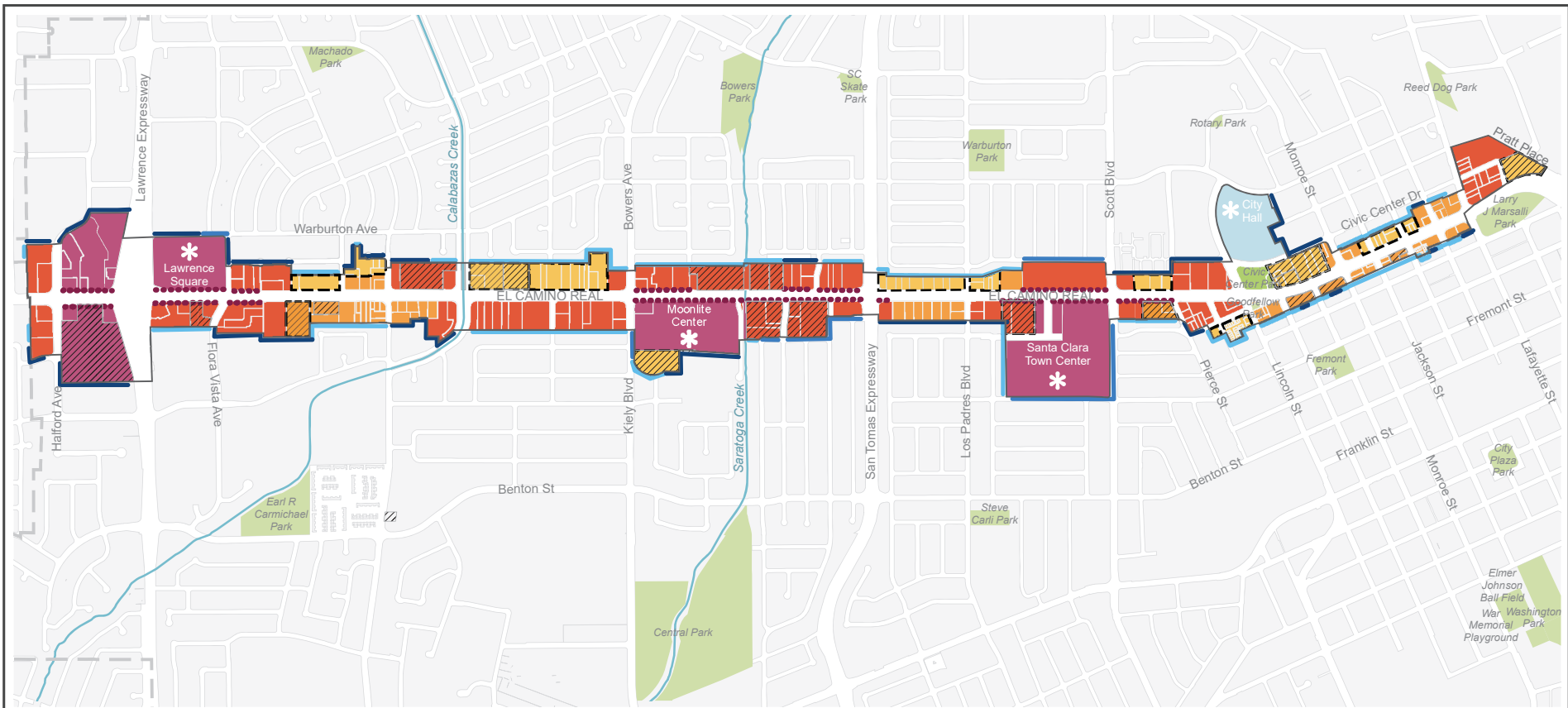
Biological Resources: The project area is developed and generally does not provide suitable habitat for special-status species. The EIR will discuss impacts to migratory birds associated with street trees along El Camino Real and address consistency with the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance.



Legend

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|---|---|---|--|--|
| <p> Regional Commercial
 5-6 Stories
 Commercial required: 0.2 min FAR
 Residential: 55-100 du/acre</p> | <p> Community Mixed-Use
 4-5 Stories
 Commercial: Allowed not required
 Residential: 35-65 du/acre</p> | <p> Medium Density Residential
 3-4 Stories
 Commercial: Allowed not required
 Residential: 16-35 du/acre</p> | <p> Public/Quasi-Public</p> | <p> Parcels</p> |
| <p> Ground Floor Commercial Required</p> | <p> Public/Quasi-Public</p> | <p> Parcels</p> | <p> Public/Quasi-Public</p> | <p> Parcels</p> |





Legend

--- City Boundary	Parks	Directly abuts a single-family residential parcel	0 .125 .25 .5 Miles	
- - - Plan Boundary	Creeks	Across the street from a single-family residential parcel	5 Minute Walk	
Parcels		Directly abuts or across the street from a multi-family residential parcel		
Land Use Designation				
Regional Commercial Mixed Use	Corridor Residential - Low	Recent/Pending Projects		
Corridor Mixed Use	Public/Quasi-Public	Land Use Change Parcels		
Corridor Residential	Ground Floor Commercial Required			

Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources: The Draft EIR will evaluate the potential for the project to impact historic buildings, based on a review of the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) and the City's list of historic properties. Additionally, the Draft EIR will examine potential impacts on tribal cultural resources (TCRs), compliant with Assembly Bill 52, and other potential subsurface cultural resources.

Energy: Future development envisioned in the ECR Plan would consume energy. The Draft EIR will examine whether energy use would be wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary, or would conflict with an applicable plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

Geology and Soils: The EIR will analyze potential geological and seismic impacts from project construction and operation.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Future development envisioned in the ECR Plan would generate regional and global greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) as a result of construction and operational activities. The EIR will evaluate whether emissions would conflict with emissions reduction goals and plans.

Hazards and Hazardous Emissions: The EIR will analyze the potential for hazardous materials contamination within and near the project area. The analysis will focus on the potential for these materials to be released during construction of the development envisioned in the ECR Plan.

Hydrology and Water Quality: The EIR will analyze the potential water quality impacts of redevelopment activities in the project area envisioned in the ECR Plan. The EIR will also address impacts related to special flood hazard zones and inundation.

Land Use and Planning: The EIR will analyze whether the project would conflict with relevant land use plans, policies, and regulations such that environmental impacts would result.

Noise and Vibration: The EIR will analyze short-term impacts due to potential construction noise on sensitive residential receptors adjacent to the El Camino Real corridor and long-term noise exposure from operational traffic and development envisioned in the ECR Plan.

Population and Housing: The EIR will analyze the potential for future development under the ECR Plan to displace existing people or housing, and whether implementation of the ECR Plan would lead to unplanned population growth.

Public Services: Implementation of the ECR Plan would increase the demand for public services, including fire, police protection, parks, and libraries. The EIR will address the availability of public facilities and determine if build out of the ECR Plan would require the construction of new facilities.

Recreation: The EIR will analyze potential impacts to parks and recreational facilities resulting from the population growth that would be facilitated by the residential development envisioned in the ECR Plan.

Transportation: The project would alter vehicle movement and circulation in the El Camino Real Corridor and enhance transit and active transportation modes. Based on the City of Santa Clara's requirements, the Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) will focus on the operations of key intersections and freeway segments in the vicinity of the plan area. The study will include an analysis of AM and PM peak hour traffic conditions using the City's significance criteria as well as the criteria used by the Santa

Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and Santa Clara County. The project's impact on pedestrian, bicycle, and transit services will also be discussed in the EIR.¹

Utilities and Service Systems: Implementation of the ECR Plan would result in thousands of new residential units in the El Camino Real Corridor. Future residents would increase the demand for utilities, including water and sanitary sewer services, and solid waste disposal. The EIR will evaluate project impacts to existing utilities and service systems.

Other Required Analyses: Based on initial review and existing conditions within the project area, the following environmental resources would not require additional analysis, as no impacts would occur:

- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Mineral Resources
- Wildfire

The Draft EIR will also discuss the cumulative impacts of the project in combination with other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects in the vicinity. The Draft EIR will address alternatives to the project that would reduce or avoid identified significant impacts. In conformance with the CEQA Guidelines, the EIR will include consistency with local and regional plans and policies, growth inducing impacts, significant irreversible changes, references, and organizations/persons consulted, and EIR authors.

PURPOSE OF THIS NOTICE: In accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, the City has prepared this NOP to inform agencies and interested parties that an EIR will be prepared for the above-referenced project. The purpose of a NOP is to provide sufficient information about the project to allow agencies and interested parties the opportunity to provide a meaningful response related to the scope and content of the EIR, including mitigation measures that should be considered and alternatives that should be addressed.

¹ The City has confirmed that the revised Specific Plan meets the criteria for Transit Supportive Projects and would not require a VMT analysis per the City's Transportation Analysis Policy.