

3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This chapter of the Environmental Assessment (EA) describes the proposed Housing Element Update, General Plan Consistency Update, and associated Zoning Ordinance amendments, together referred to as the “Plan Components,” and the processes that created them. It also describes the potential future development associated with the Plan Components.

This EA has been prepared in accordance with California Government Code Section 65759(a)(2), which states that when bringing a General Plan, including the Housing Element, into compliance with a court order, a local agency shall prepare an environmental assessment, the content of which shall substantially conform to the required content of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

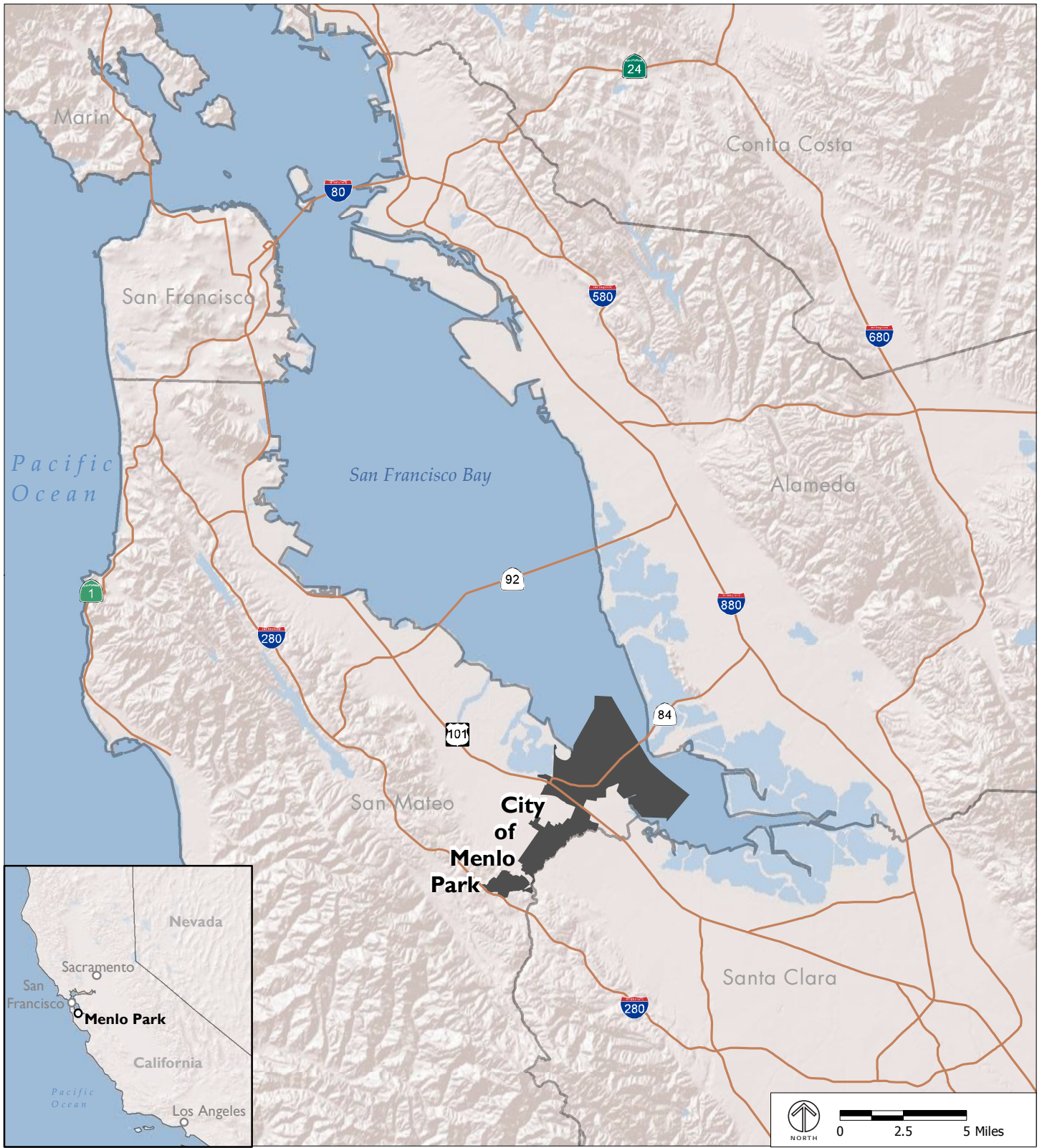
In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this EA describes the potential programmatic environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Plan Components.¹ The City of Menlo Park (City) is the lead agency for the environmental review of the Plan Components.

A. Menlo Park Location and Setting

Figure 3-1 shows Menlo Park’s regional location. Menlo Park is located in the San Francisco Bay Area, in San Mateo County. Menlo Park is situated near the southern end of the San Francisco Bay Peninsula, approximately halfway between San Francisco and San Jose. The City is bordered by Atherton and Redwood City to the north-northwest; the San Francisco Bay to the north-northeast; East Palo Alto to the east; Palo Alto to the south-southeast; and Woodside, Ladera, and Portola Valley to the south-southwest. The City covers approximately 18 square miles, of which approximately 12 square miles consist of San Francisco Bay and wetlands.

¹ As described in Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines, *program-level* environmental review documents are appropriate when a project consists of a series of actions related to the issuance of rules, regulations, and other planning criteria. The project that is the subject of this EA consists of long-term plans that will be implemented as policy documents guiding future development activities and City actions. Because this is a program-level EA, this document does not evaluate the impacts of specific, individual developments that may be allowed under the Housing Element, General Plan, and Zoning Ordinance. Future specific projects may require separate environmental review.

CITY OF MENLO PARK
HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE, GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY UPDATE, AND
ZONING AMENDMENTS
PROJECT DESCRIPTION



Source: City of Menlo Park; The Planning Center | DC&E, 2012; ESRI 2010; FHA 2002.

- Highway
- City Limits

FIGURE 3-1
REGIONAL LOCATION

The Menlo Park sphere of influence (SOI) includes incorporated City lands and those areas which may be considered for future annexation by the City. The Menlo Park SOI is regulated by the San Mateo Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo), which determines the unincorporated communities that would be best and most likely served by city agencies and hence, represent areas with the greater potential for annexation by the City. Once property is annexed into the City, future development is subject to the standards prescribed by the City's General Plan, Municipal Code, and other City regulations.

The SOI designation for the City includes unincorporated West Menlo Park, Week End Acres, Menlo Oaks, as well as the Stanford Linear Accelerator. The potential future development under the Plan Components does not include potential housing outside the City Limits; however, for the purposes of this environmental review the City's SOI defines the EA Study Area boundaries.

Interstate 280 and Highway 101 provide north-south access to San Francisco to the north and San Jose to the south. For purposes of this document, State Route 82 also runs north-south through the City. State Route 84 provides access to the East Bay across the Dumbarton Bridge, which touches down at its western end in Menlo Park. A Caltrain station is located in downtown Menlo Park, with service to San Francisco and San Jose. The City is shown in its local context in Figure 3-2.

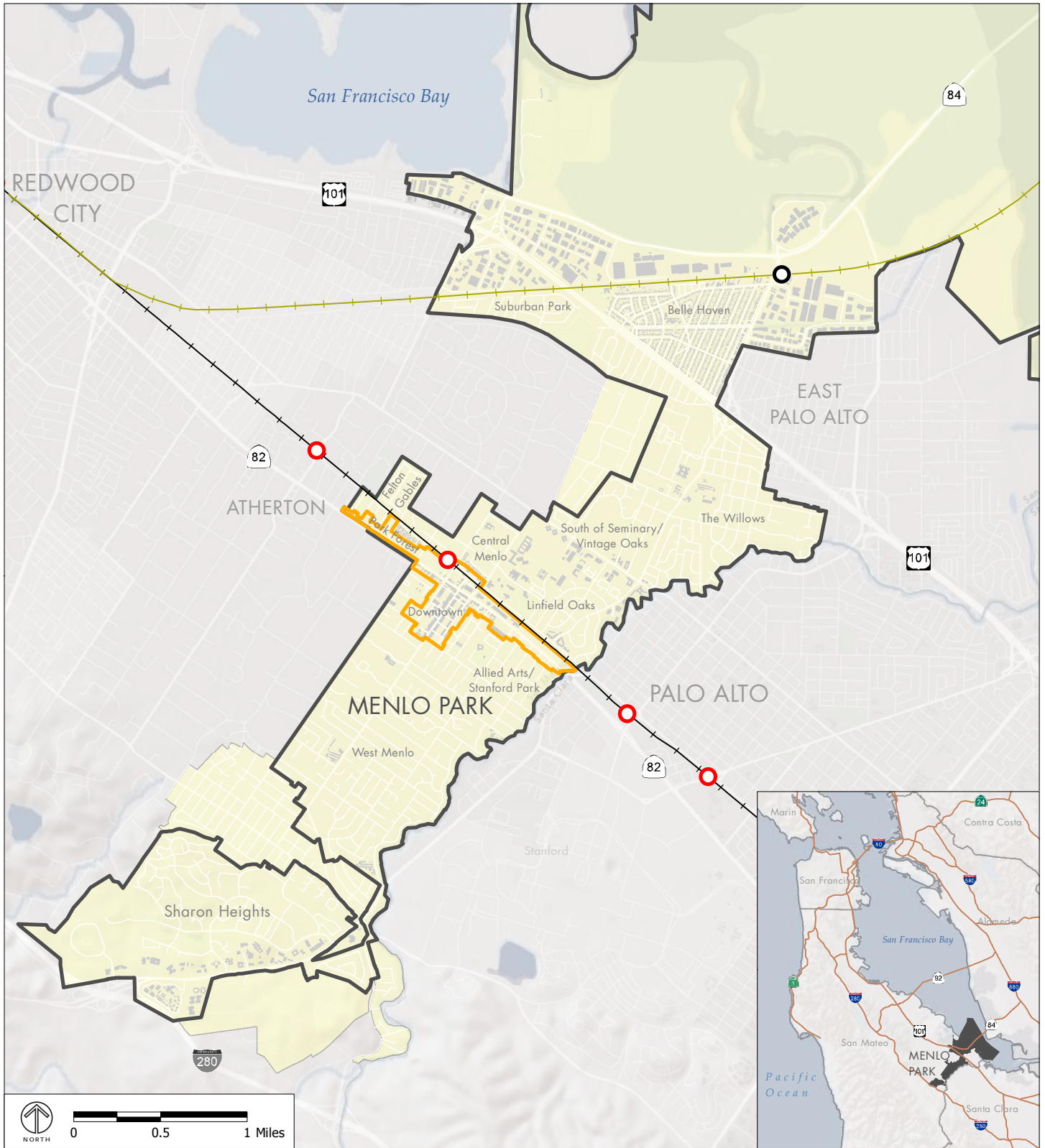
In 2012 the population of Menlo Park was approximately 32,513 people and 12,388 households in Menlo Park with an average household size of 2.55 people.²

B. Plan Component Objectives

The overall focus of the Housing Element is to enhance community life, character, and vitality through the provision of adequate housing opportunities for people at all income levels, while being sensitive to the small-town character of Menlo Park. The following are the specific objectives for the Plan Components:

- “ **Ensure Overall Community Quality of Life:** Develop a vision for Menlo Park that supports sustainable local, regional, and State housing, transportation, and environmental goals, while maintaining the high quality of life, small town feel, and village character of Menlo Park, which make it distinctive and enjoyable to its residents.

² State of California, Department of Finance, 2012. *E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, January 2011 and 2012, with 2010 Benchmark*. Sacramento, California.



Source: City of Menlo Park; The Planning Center | DC&E, 2012; ESRI 2010; FHA 2002.

- CalTrain Stations
- Potential Station Location
- Dumbarton Rail Corridor
- CalTrain ROW
- El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan
- City Limits
- Sphere of Influence

FIGURE 3-2

- “ **Address Housing Needs:** Assess housing needs and provide a vision for housing within the City to satisfy the needs of a diverse population to comply with State law and provide the City’s regional fair share of land available for residential development.
- “ **Provide a Variety of Housing Choices:** Provide a variety of housing opportunities proportionally by income to accommodate the needs of people who currently work or live in Menlo Park, such as teachers, young people just getting started, and seniors who want to down-size, who either cannot find homes or cannot afford market-rate housing in Menlo Park.
- “ **Address the City’s Share of Regional Housing Needs:** Ensure General Plan and Zoning capacity for an adequate number of new housing units to meet the Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) at all income levels for the current (2007 to 2014) and prior (1999 to 2006) planning periods.
- “ **Ensure New Development Compatibility:** Ensure that development of new housing is sensitive to and compatible with adjacent neighborhoods.
- “ **Preserve Existing Housing:** Maintain the existing housing stock.
- “ **Provide Effective Housing Policies and Programs:** Continue existing and develop new programs and policies to meet the projected affordable housing need, including the needs of persons living with disabilities and other special needs households at extremely low, very low, low, and moderate income levels.
- “ **Remove Constraints that Unduly Impact Housing Development:** Evaluate potential constraints to housing development and encourage new housing in locations supported by existing or planned infrastructure, while maintaining existing neighborhood character.
- “ **Ensure Appropriate Zoning for Special Needs Housing:** Provide housing for seniors, person living with disabilities, female-headed households, large families, homeless, and other persons with special housing needs, including zoning for emergency shelter, transitional, and supportive housing opportunities.
- “ **Provide Design Guidance for New Development to Fit with Community Character:** Develop design guidelines or similar tools to ensure development of housing for all income levels while maintaining community character.
- “ **Provide Adequate Sites for Higher Density Housing Consistent with the City’s RNHA Requirements:** Identify appropriate housing sites, within specified areas proximate to transportation, shopping, and schools, and the accompanying zoning required to accommodate housing development for higher density residential development and to encourage affordable housing development.

- “ **Comply with the Settlement Agreement:** Present a Housing Element that meets the requirements of the Settlement Agreement and is completed within the timeframe established in the Settlement Agreement.
- “ **Achieve Housing Element Certification:** Obtain certification of the City’s Housing Element by the State’s Department of Housing and Community Development as substantially in compliance with State Housing Element law.
- “ **Assure Consistency of All General Plan Elements:** Make all elements of the General Plan consistent with the Housing Element update.
- “ **Provide Incentives to Encourage Affordable Housing:** Establish an Affordable Housing Overlay Zoning designation and other policies and programs to encourage affordable housing development.
- “ **Ensure Implementation of Housing Element and General Plan Programs:** Complete amendments to the Menlo Park Zoning Ordinance and other programs in a timely manner as defined in the Settlement Agreement and consistent with the Housing Element and the General Plan.
- “ **Implement City Actions in Support of Affordable Housing Development:** Implement policies and programs in the Housing Element in support of affordable housing, including the allocation of funds from the City’s Below Market Rate (BMR) housing fund and support of developments determined by the City to be viable for Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) funding.

C. Planning Process

In May 2012, three housing advocacy groups, Peninsula Interfaith Action, Urban Habitat Program, and Youth United for Community Action, filed an action against the City of Menlo Park, citing the City’s failure to comply with the State law requirements regarding the Housing Element (i.e. Government Code Sections 65580 to 65589.8). The resulting Settlement Agreement requires the City to adopt a new Housing Element Update within a specific timeframe that addresses both the current (2007 to 2014) and prior (1999 to 2006) planning periods. The Settlement Agreement also sets forth requirements that the Housing Element Update include an Affordable Housing Overlay or other zoning mechanism to encourage affordable housing development and that the final Housing Element be certified by the State Department of Housing and Community Development as compliant with State law (Government Code Sections 65580-65589.8). Within 60 days of adopting the Housing Element Update, the City must complete all General Plan amendments required to make the General Plan consistent with the Housing Element and accommodate the full RHNA for the current planning period (2007 to 2014) as well as the previous planning period (1999 to

2006). Furthermore, also within 60 days of adopting the Housing Element Update, the City must take ministerial action to rezone for affordable housing on those sites and with those parameters identified in the Settlement Agreement and the Housing Element Update.

On May 22, 2012, the City Council approved the work program for the Plan Components and confirmed the membership of a Housing Element Steering Committee.³ The role of the Steering Committee was to discuss and refine the housing strategy and oversee the approach for community and stakeholder outreach. The Steering Committee met six times during the preparation of the Draft Housing Element. Four community workshops and various stakeholder interviews were conducted during the preparation of the Housing Element Update.

In October 2012, the City's Housing Commission and Planning Commission reviewed the Draft Housing Element and provided direction to the City Council for consideration of the Housing Element Update. The City Council reviewed the Draft Housing Element in October 2012, and directed City staff to submit the Draft Housing Element to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The Draft Housing Element was submitted to HCD on October 31, 2012. The City received the comments submitted by HCD on the Draft Housing Element on December 31, 2012.

Concurrent with the preparation of the Housing Element Update, the City has prepared an associated General Plan Consistency Update and Zoning Ordinance amendments to bring these documents into consistency with the Housing Element and enable the development of housing in Menlo Park in fulfillment of the City's RHNA.

D. Summary of Major Plan Components

1. Housing Element Update

The Plan Components include a comprehensive update to the City's Housing Element, in compliance with Government Code Section 65580 *et seq.* The proposed Housing Element Update policies and programs are intended to guide the City's housing efforts through the 2007 to 2014 RHNA cycle. Under State housing law, the City's Housing Element must:

³ May 22, 2012 serves as the baseline date for the environmental analysis presented in this Environmental Assessment as that is the time the environmental analysis commenced.

- “ Identify and analyze goals, policies, quantified objectives, financial resources, and scheduled programs to maintain, preserve, improve, and develop housing.
- “ Include an assessment of existing and projected housing needs for all income levels.
- “ Identify adequate sites that will be zoned and available within the 2007 to 2014 RHNA cycle to meet the City’s RHNA for all income levels.
- “ Be submitted for HCD review and comment.

The proposed Housing Element, which includes the October 31, 2012 Draft Housing Element with additions and edits contained in the Draft Housing Element Errata reviewed by the Menlo Park City Council on December 11, 2012, is available under separate cover from the City of Menlo Park Planning Division and is also available online at Housing Element project page at www.menlopark.org. To meet its RHNA for the past two planning periods, the City needs to demonstrate that it can accommodate 1,975 units. The Housing Element calculates an “adjusted” RHNA that accounts for units that can be credited to the City based on past construction activity, current zoning, buildout of existing plans, and implementation of proposed Housing Element programs. Based on these calculations, the City has identified a need to rezone sites to accommodate an additional 500 housing units for lower income (very low income and low income) households. To meet this remaining RHNA, the City is considering 5 sites for possible rezonings with a minimum density of 30 du/ac. While the five potential housing sites would accommodate up to 894 net new dwelling units at the proposed densities, the Plan Components considered in this EA would allow up to 900 dwelling units to be rezoned amongst the five sites. Five hundred dwelling units at densities of 30 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) is required to meet RHNA requirements.⁴ The scope of this EA provides the ability for multiple sites to be rezoned to meet the affordable housing requirements for low and very-income categories, and provide opportunities for mixed-income housing within some of the sites. In addition, the Plan Components of this EA considers an additional 118 infill dwelling units around downtown and up to 300 secondary dwelling units, for a total of up to 1,318 new dwelling units. See Table 3-1 for details on the City’s ability to meet the adjusted RHNA.

⁴ To provide local governments with greater certainty and clarity in evaluating and determining what densities facilitate the development of housing that is affordable to lower-income households, statute provides two options – the City can either: (1) conduct an analysis of market demand and trends, financial feasibility and residential project experience to demonstrate the lower densities can facilitate lower income housing development; or (2) apply Government Code Section 65583.2(c)(3)(B), which allows local governments to utilize “default” density standards deemed adequate to meet the “appropriate zoning” test, which in Menlo Park’s case are sites designated at 30 units per acre or more given Menlo Park’s size and location.

As shown in Table 3-1, as part of the Plan Components the City could amend its Zoning Ordinance to accommodate up to 900 housing units and implement programs to accommodate up to 418 housing units by 2014. Although the Plan Components considers General Plan and Zoning capacity for 1,318 new units by 2014, buildout of the potential future development is based on a horizon year of 2035; therefore, this EA analyzes growth occurring between 2014 and 2035, a 21-year buildout horizon. The 2035 horizon year is generally consistent with other key planning documents, including the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County's Congestion Management Program 2011, the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan EIR, and the City of Menlo Park's 2010 Urban Water Management Plan.

The proposed Housing Element does not consist of one or more actual development projects involving the physical construction of dwelling units, but rather provides policies and implementing programs under which new housing development would be allowed. As discussed in Chapter 1, Introduction, of this EA, the development applications for individual housing developments would be submitted separately to the City for review, and would be subject, if necessary, to separate, site-specific CEQA analysis. This EA discusses the potential development of housing sites and the adoption of related policies and programs at a programmatic level.

a. Housing Sites

As previously discussed, the potential housing would occur within the City Limits and would not extend into the Menlo Park SOI. The locations of the potential housing sites are listed on Table 3-2 and shown on Figure 3-3. The suitability of the sites was determined through an extensive process involving community workshops, public comment, discussion and direction on site evaluation criteria and potential higher density housing sites and other housing programs by the Housing Element Steering Committee, review by the City's Housing Commission and Planning Commission, and then direction provided by the Menlo Park City Council. Figures 3-4 through 3-8 show an aerial photograph of each of the five potential housing sites and their adjacent land uses.

While this EA discusses the impacts of five housing sites, infill units around downtown, and second units throughout the City totaling 1,318 potential dwelling units, the technical analysis prepared for the EA considered the same total units distributed over 14 housing site locations. A map showing the 14 housing sites is provided in Appendix B.

TABLE 3-1 ABILITY TO MEET THE REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATION

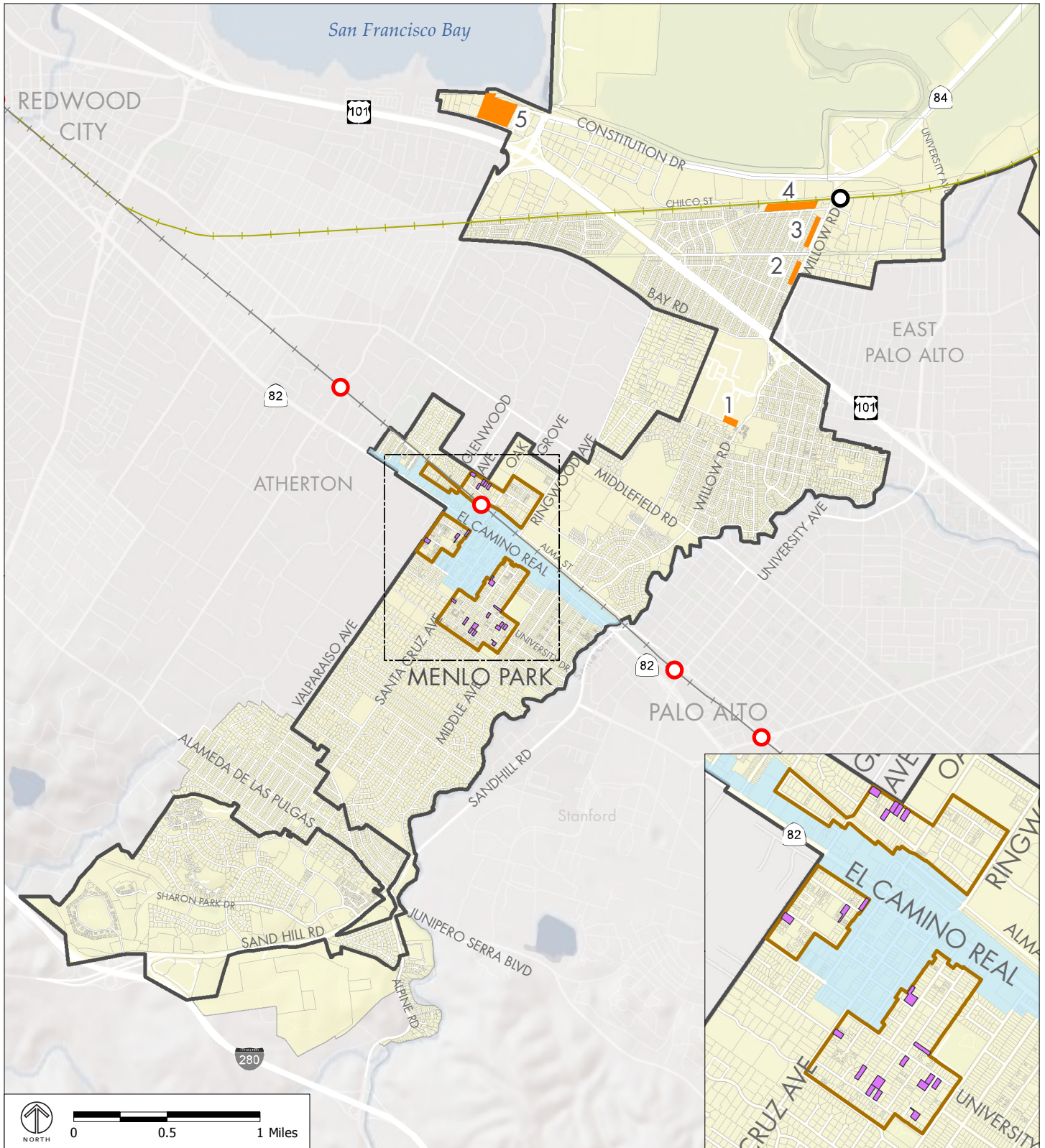
Category	Dwelling Units	
	Total	Lower-Income ^a
RHNA Planning Period		
1999 to 2006	982	274
2007 to 2014	993	389
Total RHNA	1,975	663
City's Progress Toward Its RHNA		
Units Built 1999 to 2012	295	3
Second Units Built or Approved, 1999 to 2012	8	6
Available Sites under Existing Zoning	600	0
El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan Zoning	680	200
Total Progress Toward RHNA	1,583	209
Adjusted RHNA (1999 to 2014 RHNA – Progress Toward RHNA)	392	454
Proposed Buildout		
Housing Site Rezoning	900	500
Housing Programs		
Infill Units Around Downtown*	118	0
Second Units**	300	210
Total Units under Housing Program	418	210
Total	1,318	710
Buildout Amount over Adjusted RHNA	926	256

^a Lower income units include units with very low and low income households, and is a subset of the total figure.

*Accounts for infill housing sites of lots 10,000 square feet or greater.

** Accounts for 6 percent of single-family lots 6,000 square feet or greater.

Source: City of Menlo Park, 2012.



Source: City of Menlo Park; The Planning Center | DC&E, 2012; ESRI 2010; FHA 2002.

- Potential Station Location
- CalTrain Stations
- Dumbarton Rail Corridor
- Lots with Additional Housing Unit Potential
- Potential Sites to be Studied for Rezoning to Higher Density
- City Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Infill Areas around Downtown
- El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan

FIGURE 3-3

HOUSING AND INFILL SITES



FIGURE 3-4
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF SITE 1

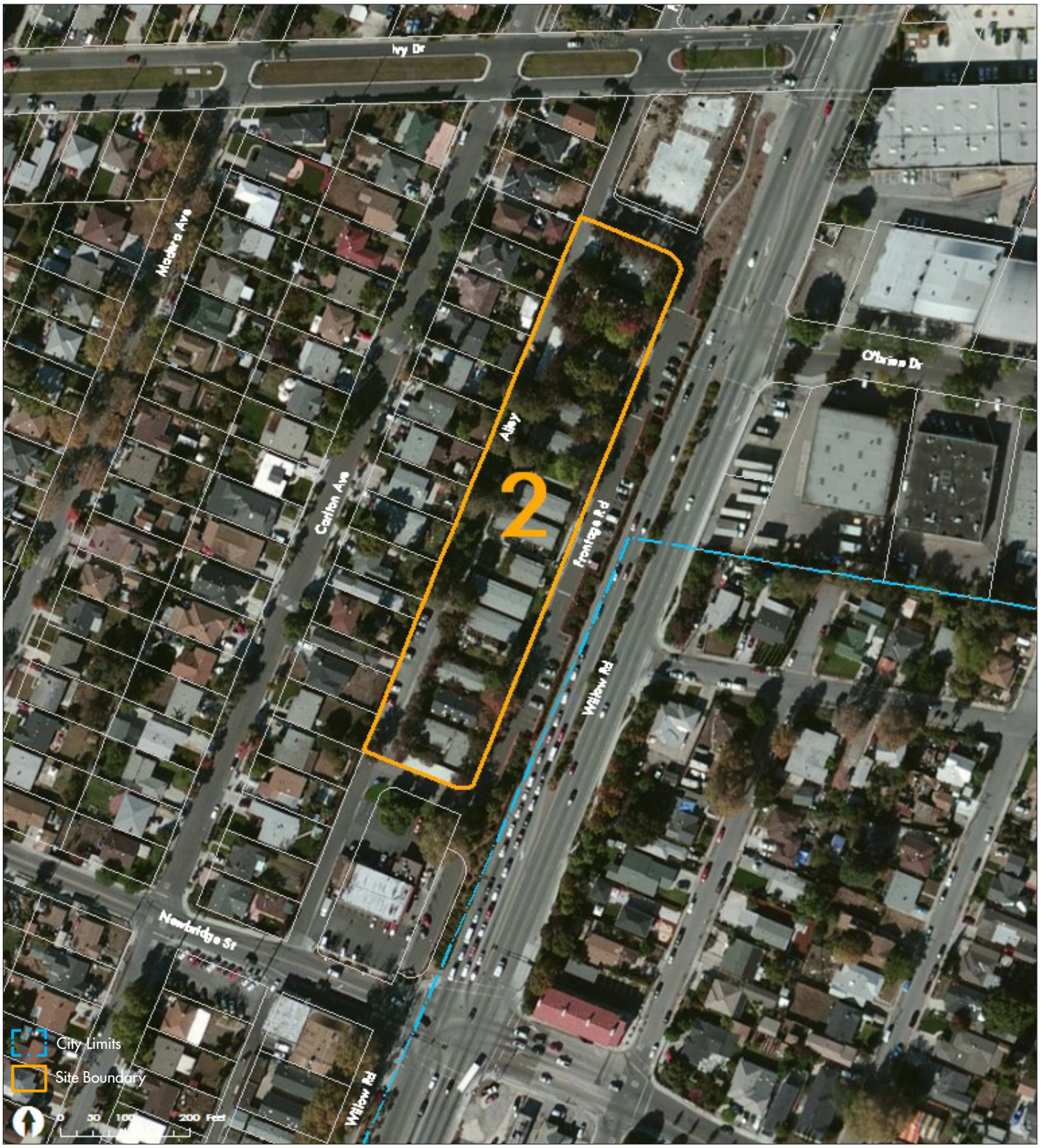


FIGURE 3-5
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF SITE 2

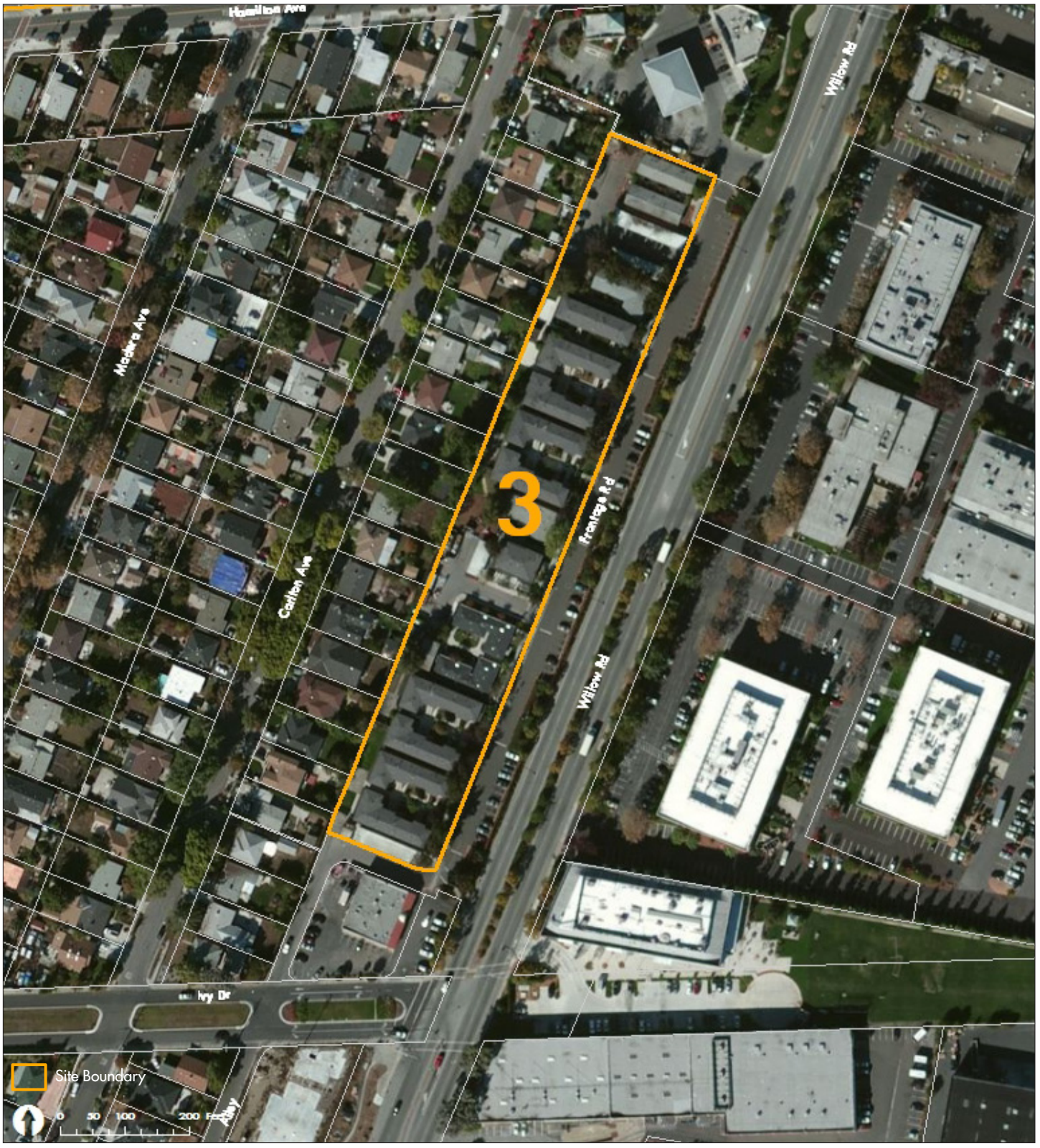


FIGURE 3-6
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF SITE 3

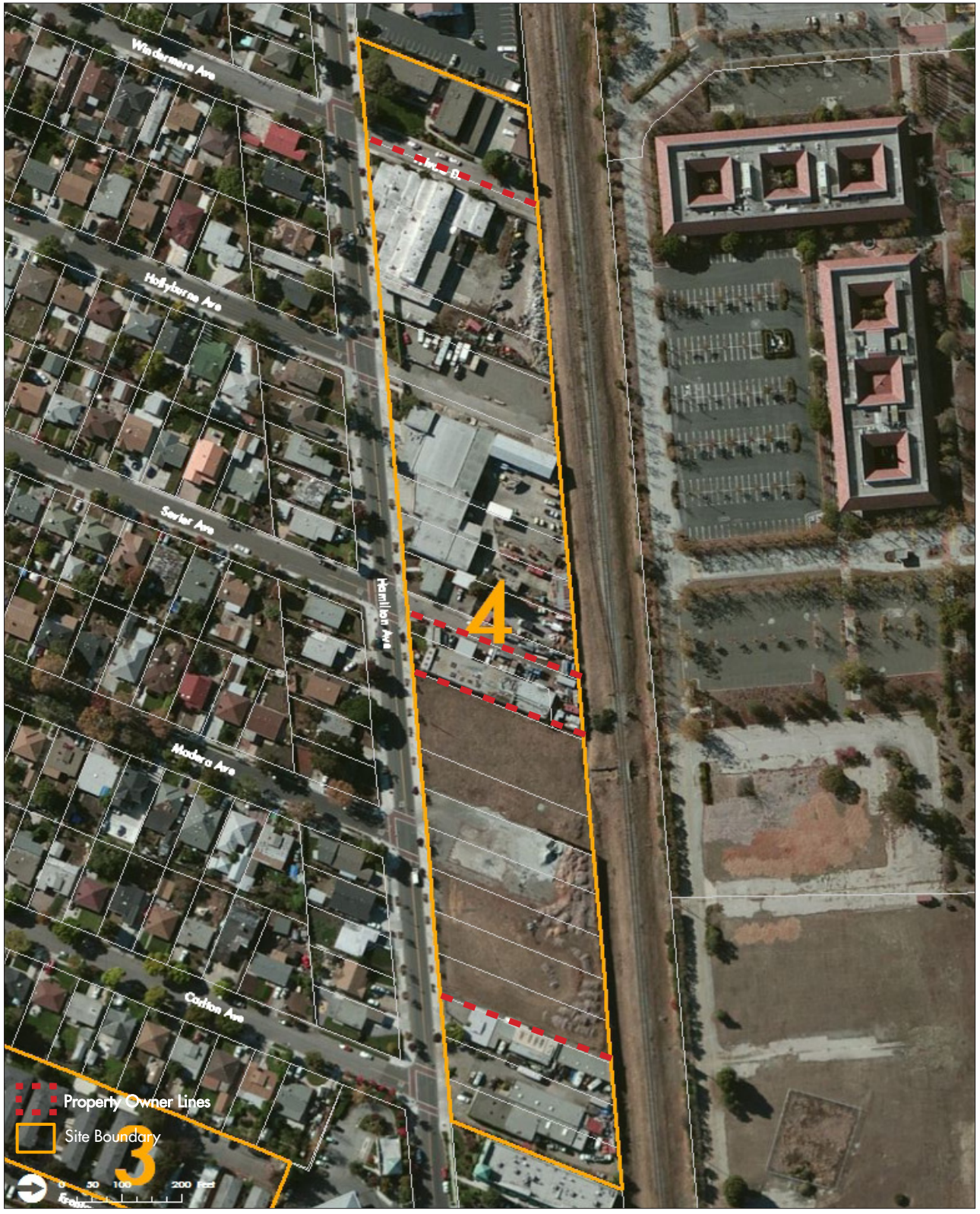


FIGURE 3-7
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF SITE 4

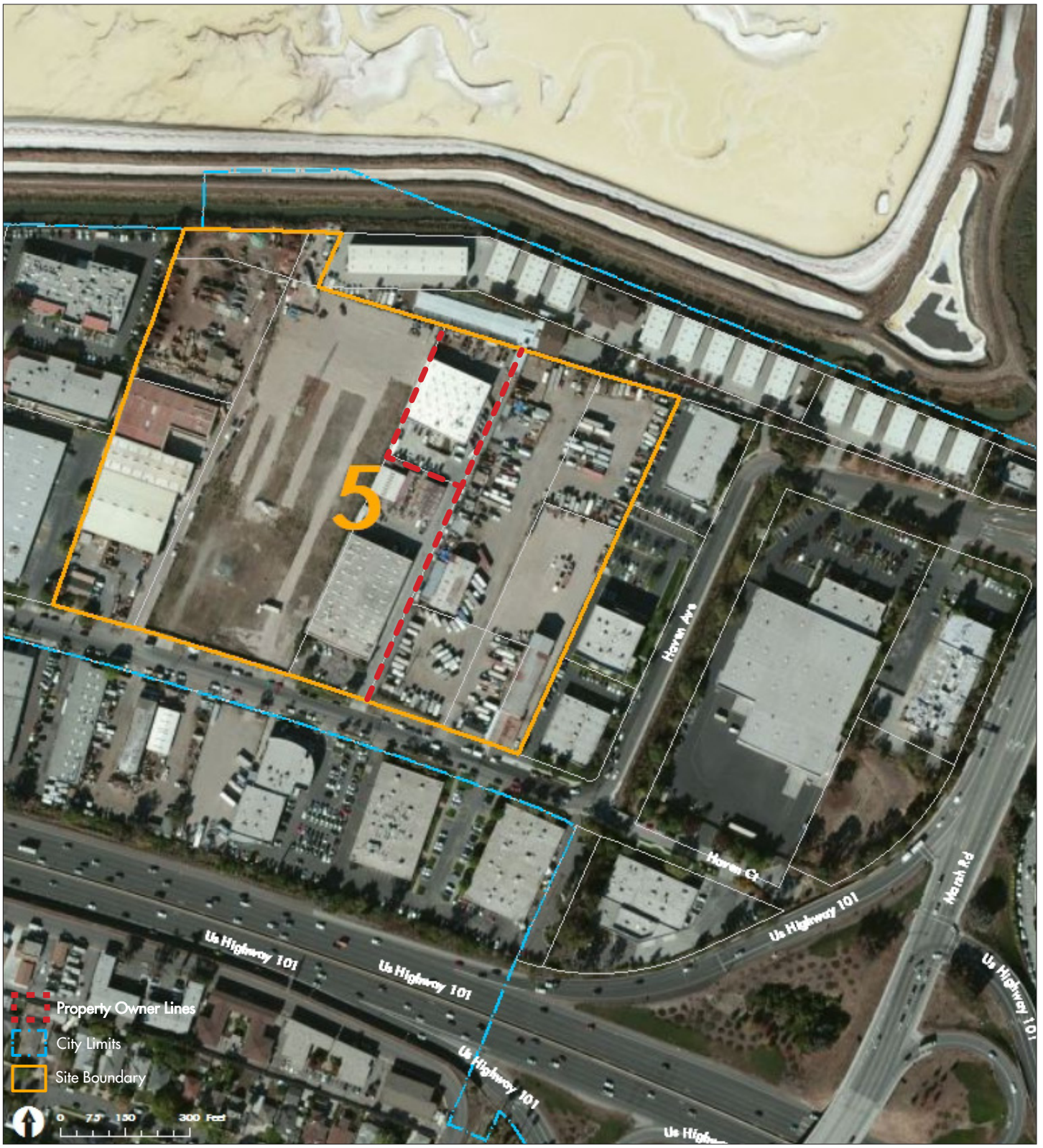


FIGURE 3-8
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF SITE 5

Table 3-2 identifies the location, existing zoning and land use designations, and the potential development capacity of each housing site under review as part of this EA. The City will amend the Zoning Ordinance to accommodate the potential development capacities shown in Table 3-2, up to a total of 900 housing units on the housing sites, as described further below in Section D.3, Zoning Ordinance Amendments.

b. Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs

The proposed Housing Element includes goals, quantified objectives, policies, and implementing programs to promote its overall objectives:

- “ A *goal* is a desired state for the future.
- “ *Quantified objectives* identify program targets for the maximum number of housing units to be constructed, rehabilitated, conserved, and preserved at various income levels during the Housing Element planning period (2007-2014).
- “ A *policy* is a recognized community position on a particular subject.
- “ An *implementing program* is a detailed action that the City, or other identified entity, will implement to attain the Housing Element’s goals and objectives.

The proposed Housing Element sets forth the following four goals:

- “ **Goal 1:** Build local government institutional capacity and monitor accomplishments to respond effectively to housing needs. (Supported by Policies H1.1 through H1.9 and accomplished through Implementing Programs H1.A through H1.L.)
- “ **Goal 2:** Maintain, protect, and enhance existing housing and neighborhoods. (Supported by Policies H2.1 through H2.6 and accomplished through Implementing Programs H2.A through H2.D.)
- “ **Goal 3:** Provide housing for special needs populations that is coordinated with support services. (Supported by Policies H3.1 through H3.9 and accomplished through Implementing Programs H3.A through H3.I.)
- “ **Goal 4:** Use land efficiently to meet housing needs at a variety of income levels, implement sustainable development practices, and blend well-designed new housing into the community. (Supported by Policies H4.1 through H4.13 and accomplished through Implementing Programs H4.A through H4.P.) As explained above, proposed housing programs would implement the goals and policies established in the Housing Element. The City proposes to accommodate up to 418 units through these programs, as described below. This figure represents a realistic estimate of the numbers of units that would be created as a result of each program.

CITY OF MENLO PARK
HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE, GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY UPDATE,
AND ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

TABLE 3-2 PROPOSED HOUSING UNITS RESULTING FROM IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED HOUSING ELEMENT

Site	Site Name/Address ^a	APN	Existing Zoning ^b	Existing General Plan Designation	Existing Use	Demolition Required	Lot Area (ac)	Proposed DU/ac	Potential New DU	Existing DU	Potential Net New DU
1	Veterans Affairs Campus ^c 700 block of Willow Road	062470050	PF	Public Facilities	Vacant Portion of Campus	No	1.87	32	60	0	60
2	MidPen's Gateway Apts 1200 block of Willow Road	062103610	R3	Medium Density Residential	Multi-Family Residential	Yes	2.27	40	90	48	42
3	MidPen's Gateway Apts 1300 block of Willow Road	055383560	R3	Medium Density Residential	Multi-Family Residential	Yes	2.97	40	118	82	36
4	Hamilton Avenue East 700-800 blocks of Hamilton Ave	Multiple Parcels ^d	M1	Limited Industry	Light Industrial and Vacant Land	Yes	7.20	30	216	0	216
5 ^e	Haven Avenue 3600 block of Haven Avenue	Multiple Parcels ^f	M2	Limited Industry	Light Manufacturing, Storage, and Vacant	Yes	15.50	35	540 ^k	0	540
Maximum Potential Units Identified for Higher Density Housing Rezoning											894
Maximum Units Rezoned for Higher Density Housing Under EA^g											900
Infill Areas Around Downtown			R3	Medium Density Residential	Varies ^h	Yes	0.23 or greater	30	194	76	118
Second Units ⁱ											300
Total Units from Proposed Housing Programs											418
TOTAL UNITS PROPOSED^j											1,318

Notes: APN = Assessor's Parcel Number; DU = dwelling unit; DU/ac = dwelling units per acre

^a See Figure 3-3 for a map of the housing sites.

^b City of Menlo Park Zoning District abbreviations: PF = Public Facilities District, M1 = Light Industrial District, R3 = Apartment District, M2 = General Industrial District

^c Although the City has been studying and accounting for the potential impacts of a 60-unit development that is currently proposed on Site 1, the City does not need to take any action to rezone the site due to a Federal pre-emption of the City's land use authority.

^d Site 4 APNs: 055374120; 055396070; 55396030, 55396060, 55397010, 55397020, 55397030; 55397040, 55397050; 55398240, 55398010; 55398260, 55398030, 55398040, 55398050, 55398060, 55398070, 55398080.

^e Housing Site 5 assumes the existing buildings would be demolished and replaced with residential land uses only.

^f Site 5 APNs: 55170260, 55170200, 55170190, 55170270, 55170180; 55170320; 55170330; 55170210, 55170220, 55170080, 55170070, 55170060.

^g Although the potential development identified for the housing sites totals 894 housing units, under the proposed Plan Components the City would only rezone sites to allow up to a maximum of 900 housing units.

^h Residential land uses include single family, five or more units, duplex, triplex and detached units.

ⁱ The exact location for second units is not known; however, these sites would be constructed on property currently designated for single-family residential development.

^j The total number of proposed units under environmental review equals a maximum of 900 units on proposed housing sites plus 418 units through proposed housing programs for a total of 1,318 units at buildout.

^k The 76 units that were originally included as part of former Site 13 (Post Office) have been transferred to Site 5 (Haven Avenue [former Site 14]).

Source: City of Menlo Park, 2013.

i. Infill Programs Around Downtown

As part of the Housing Element, the City will evaluate and implement zoning, policies, or programs to help promote infill housing opportunities located in close proximity to transit and other services. The program will first focus on lots 10,000 square feet or greater in areas surrounding in the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan area. Possible expansion to smaller lots at a later date would be subject to a separate environmental review. Modifications to encourage infill housing could include one or more of the following:

- “ Increase in maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR).
- “ Increase in maximum density.
- “ Flexibility in required parking standards dependent on tenancy (e.g. senior housing) and/or location (e.g. proximity to transit services).
- “ Development of “density unit equivalents.”
- “ Creation of multi-family and mixed-use design guidelines to provide more clarity and certainty in the review process.
- “ Consideration of fee reduction or waivers.

Based on program implementation, it is anticipated that 118 net new units could be built on identified infill sites by buildout year 2035.⁵ Infill sites around the downtown area are shown in Figure 3-3. Implementation of the Program H4.A, “Modify Development Standards to Encourage Infill Housing,” would contribute to the construction of infill housing around the downtown area under buildout conditions.

ii. Second Unit Programs

Programs established for the accommodation of second units would modify the City’s existing regulations and process related to construction of second units on single-family residential parcels, initially on lots 6,000 square feet or greater in area. Modifications would include reduction in minimum parcel size, allowances for larger second units, flexibility in height limits, reduced fees (possible reduction in both Planning/Building fees and impact fees as a result of the small size of the units), flexibility in on-site parking requirements, and a greater City role in publicizing and providing guidance for the approval of second units. Based on studies conducted in San Mateo County and elsewhere in the San Francisco Bay Area, it is antici-

⁵ For the purposes of this environmental analysis, it is assumed that development on infill sites would include the demolition of existing development and redevelopment at proposed, higher densities. Whether or not existing development is actually demolished would ultimately be determined by market conditions.

pated that two-thirds to three-quarters of second units built are affordable to lower-income households due to their small size and use as housing for family members at very low to no rent. With the modifications proposed in the Housing Element, it is anticipated that 300 additional second units could be built by buildout year 2035. Implementation of the Program H4.E, “Modify Second Dwelling Unit Development Standards and Permit Process,” would contribute to construction of second units under buildout conditions.

Program H4.F is an amnesty program that would legalize existing illegal second units. This program would only change the legal status of existing units, but would not contribute to the development of new units. Because the units already exist, this program is not included in the projected buildout for the purposes of this EA. However, the legalization of the units would assist the City in meeting its RHNA.

iii. Incentive and Opportunity Programs

A number of programs offer incentives for higher density, affordable and special needs housing. The following are examples of programs that would support higher density, affordable and special needs housing development, and may enable future development projects on the housing or infill sites, but are not considered to directly result in construction of new housing units:

- “ Program H3.I: Establish Density Bonus & Other Incentives for Special Needs Housing
- “ Program H4.C: Adopt Standards for an “Affordable Housing Overlay Zone”
- “ Program H4.D: Implement Inclusionary Housing Regulations and Adopt Standards to Implement State Density Bonus Law
- “ Program H4.O: Implement Actions in Support of High Potential Housing Opportunity Sites

iv. Other Programs

The remaining programs in the proposed Housing Element would implement the goals and policies of the Housing Element. These programs are part of the potential future development that is evaluated in this EA, but are not considered to directly result in the construction of new housing units.

2. General Plan Consistency Update

In order to maintain consistency between the Housing Element and other elements of the General Plan, and consistency between the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, other General Plan elements would be amended at the same time that the Housing Element is adopted. As previously discussed, within 60 days of adopting this Housing Element Update, the City plans to complete all General Plan amendments required

to make the General Plan consistent with the Housing Element. The proposed General Plan consistency update includes amendments to the following elements:

- “ Noise Element (adopted November 14, 1978)
- “ Seismic Safety and Safety Element (adopted June 22, 1976)
- “ Open Space and Conservation Element (adopted June 26, 1973)

The Plan Components also includes both text and land use amendments to the General Plan for consistency with the Housing Element programs to achieve the higher density housing. The definition of High Density Residential would be modified to allow densities greater than 40 du/ac with the application of the State Density Bonus Law or the proposed Affordable Housing Overlay. The definition of Medium Density Residential would be modified to allow up to 30 du/ac for infill housing around downtown. The General Plan land use designation for the sites selected for higher density housing from the Housing Element process would subsequently be amended to High Density Residential.

The proposed General Plan consistency update is available under separate cover from the Planning Division.

3. Zoning Ordinance Amendments

The 5 sites described in Table 3-2 above have been identified for their potential appropriateness for higher density housing (i.e. 30 or more du/ac). The City will rezone these sites to accommodate the additional 900 housing units. In order to accommodate housing for a mix of income groups and to reduce barriers to housing development, the City is considering modifications to the Zoning Ordinance, which include the following:

- “ **Rezoning for Higher Density Housing:** Evaluate the development standards, including density, FAR, parking, height, and setbacks, of the existing R-2, R-3 and R-4 zoning district, and amend the Zoning Ordinance to either modify the use and development regulations of the these zoning districts and/or create a new zoning district to allow for higher density housing (including ancillary uses to serve the residents) and establish associated design standards. The selected housing opportunity sites would be rezoned accordingly.
- “ **Housing Overlay Zone:** Create an Affordable Housing Overlay Zone to allow increased densities in appropriate sites in the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan area and other key housing opportunity sites. The overlay zone would remove potential barriers and establish development standards such as density, floor area ratio and parking requirement to achieve specified affordability levels of housing.

- “ **State Density Bonus Law and Below Market Rate Housing Program:** Update the Zoning Ordinance to be consistent with the State Density Bonus Law and modify, as needed, the BMR Guidelines to determine if any changes are needed to help facilitate the additional creation of affordable housing. .
- “ **Emergency Shelters:** Amend the Zoning Ordinance to establish an overlay zone for emergency shelter for the homeless that will detail objective standards such as maximum number of beds, off-street parking requirements, length of stay, proximity to other shelters, lighting, and security.
- “ **Transitional and Supportive Housing:** Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow residential care facilities, and transitional and supportive housing as required by State law. Transitional and supportive housing shall be considered a residential use subject only to those restrictions that apply to other residential dwellings in the same zone.
- “ **Reasonable Accommodation:** Amend Chapter 16.82 of the Zoning Ordinance to establish procedures to provide individuals with disabilities accommodations in rules, policies, practices and procedures that may be necessary to ensure equal access to housing. Relief from various land use, zoning, building codes, or other rules or procedures of the City. One example includes allowance for an encroachment into the front setback for a ramp where a variance would typically be required.
- “ **Senior and Special Needs Housing:** Zoning Ordinance amendment to establish density bonuses and other incentives for the creation of a range of accommodations at various affordability levels for seniors and persons with disabilities.

E. Buildout under the Plan Components

As previously discussed, this EA analyzes potential impacts resulting from up to 1,318 new dwelling units on the five potential housing sites throughout the City and through implementation of key planning programs for infill areas around downtown and second units for the 2007 to 2014 planning period. The development of the units would occur over the projected buildout period of 2014 to 2035. This EA evaluates the projected buildout in the year 2035, consistent with CEQA requirements that stipulate the evaluation must consider “reasonably foreseeable” direct and indirect impacts of future development. An estimation of the housing units, non-residential development, population, and jobs anticipated by 2035 under the Plan Components is shown in Table 3-3.

TABLE 3-3 BUILDOUT UNDER THE PROPOSED PLAN COMPONENTS

	Existing (2012)	Net New	Total with Future Development (2035)
Housing Units	12,388	1,318	13,706
Population ^a	32,513	3,361	35,874

^a Population is based on an average household size of 2.55 persons per household.
Source: Department of Finance, The Planning Center | DC&E, 2012.

Assuming the new units constructed under the Housing Element would have the same average household size as existing households in the City, 2.55 residents per household, the total population yield for the future development would be approximately 3,361 new residents⁶ by 2035.

The County of San Mateo, in partnership with all 20 cities in the county, including Menlo Park, has formed a sub-region responsible for completing a sub-RHNA process for the 2007 to 2014 Housing Element planning period. The jurisdictions in San Mateo County have agreed to continue the sub-RHNA process for the 2014 to 2022 Housing Element planning period.

While the City has not adopted a Housing Element since 1992, past construction and current zoning have contributed to meeting a portion of the City’s RHNA for the current (2007 to 2014) and previous (1999 to 2006) Housing Element planning periods. Applying the City’s “default” density standards, the City must rezone some of the identified sites to accommodate up to 500 units at 30 or more units per acre.⁷ The scope of this EA, however, considers rezoning for up to 900 higher density units to provide the ability for multiple sites to be rezoned to meet the affordable housing requirements for low and very-income categories, and

⁶ 2.55 residents per household x 1,318 households = 3,361 new residents.

⁷ To provide local governments with greater certainty and clarity in evaluating and determining what densities facilitate the development of housing that is affordable to lower-income households, statute provides two options – the City can either: (1) conduct an analysis of market demand and trends, financial feasibility and residential project experience to demonstrate the lower densities can facilitate lower income housing development; or (2) apply Government Code Section 65583.2(c)(3)(B), which allows local governments to utilize “default” density standards deemed adequate to meet the “appropriate zoning” test, which in Menlo Park’s case are sites designated at 30 units per acre or more given Menlo Park’s size and location.

provide opportunities for mixed-income housing within some of the sites. Based on this assumption, there are sufficient sites for housing at moderate and above moderate-income affordability levels already zoned and available in the City. The future housing sites are needed to accommodate the City's lower households housing needs. As described in Section D.1, Housing Element Update, above, the City must rezone sites to accommodate a minimum of 500 housing units for lower income (very low income and low income) households at 30 du/ac. To meet this remaining RHNA, the City proposes to rezone sites to allow at least 500 units for lower income households.

F. Intended Uses of the Plan Components and EA

This EA is intended to identify and evaluate potential environmental impacts of the adoption and implementation of the Plan Components. This EA is also intended to determine corresponding mitigation measures for identified impacts, as necessary. Subsequent development applications would be reviewed by the City for consistency with the Housing Element, General Plan, and Zoning Ordinance, and project-level environmental review would be conducted as required by CEQA.

Future activity that could occur following this EA includes the following, provided they are consistent with the Plan Components:

- Specific Plans.
- Property rezonings.
- Public and private development project approvals, such as tentative maps, variances, use permits, and other land use permits.
- Development Agreements.
- Funding approval of capital projects.
- Issuance of permits and other approvals necessary for implementation of the proposed General Plan.

G. Required Permits and Approvals

In general, the Plan Components will be adopted following approval of the EA solely by the City, without oversight or permitting by other agencies. However, following City adoption of the Housing Element as part of the Menlo Park General Plan, the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) will be asked to certify the City's Housing Element.

The Plan Components provide the opportunity for housing in the EA Study Area, but does not include any specific development proposals. Future development will need to conform to applicable zoning district development and design standards, and be consistent with General Plan Goals and Policies. Depending on the proposal, a project may be exempt or require further environmental review and subsequent analysis in a Mitigated Negative Declaration or the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report. Projects may be ministerial, requiring no discretionary action or may require review and approval by the Community Development Director, Planning Commission, and/or the City Council, and other agencies as needed. Building permits will be required for all structures.

CITY OF MENLO PARK
HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE, GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY UPDATE,
AND ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROJECT DESCRIPTION