

Addendum to ConnectMenlo General Plan Update Certified Final Environmental Impact Report and Housing Element Subsequent Environmental Impact Report

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Project Title: General Plan Circulation Element Amendments

Project Location: City of Menlo Park, San Mateo County

ConnectMenlo General Plan Update

The City of Menlo Park (City) adopted an update to the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the General Plan in November 2016, referred to as ConnectMenlo (General Plan Update). The General Plan Update was the result of a multi-year comprehensive process with robust outreach. The General Plan Update focused land use changes in the Bayfront Area to foster a new mixed-use district that includes multi-family residential, mixed-use residential and commercial developments, office uses, and life sciences uses. The land use changes could result in net new development potential of up to 2.3 million square feet of non-residential uses, up to 4,500 residential units, and up to 400 hotel rooms. While land use changes were focused on the Bayfront Area, the associated Circulation Element Update was comprehensively updated city-wide. The General Plan serves as the City's comprehensive and long range guide to land use and infrastructure development in the City and includes goals, policies, and programs applicable to private and public development and improvements within the City.

ConnectMenlo General Plan Update Program Environmental Impact Report

On November 29, 2016, the City Council certified the ConnectMenlo Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR). According to the Program EIR, the General Plan does not propose specific private developments, but identified a total development potential throughout the entire city of approximately 4 million square feet of net new nonresidential development, up to 5,350 additional residential units, and up to 400 hotel rooms. The Bayfront Area includes the majority of that development potential with approximately 3.66 million square feet of non-residential development, 4,500 residential units (3,000 unrestricted residential units and 1,500 corporate-style residential units), and 400 hotel rooms. The General Plan Update includes public open space, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and other circulation improvements. On January 31, 2023 the City Council

adopted the City of Menlo Park 6th Cycle Housing Element (Housing Element Update). The City Council certified a Subsequent EIR (SEIR) to the Program EIR that evaluated the increased housing development across the City to meet the City's 6th cycle regional housing needs allocation.

Proposed Project

At its meeting on February 28, 2023 the City Council held a study session on a draft ordinance to amend the City of Menlo Park Municipal Code to add Chapter 13.30 (Streetaries Outdoor Dining Areas) to Title 13 of the Municipal Code and Amendments to Sections 13.18.10 and 13.18.20 of Chapter 13.18 (Use of Public Right of Way) to enable the proposed streetary program. The City Council also reviewed and provided feedback on draft design standards and fees associated with the proposed streetary program. During the study session, the City Council also expressed an interest in making the temporary street closures for portions of Santa Cruz Avenue (between Curtis Street and Doyle Street) in the eastbound direction and Ryans Lane, between Crane Street and Escondido Lane, permanent. These closures currently restrict vehicle access. The conversion of the temporary street closures to permanent street closures would involve limited new construction as the temporary barriers are already in place. Additional street closures, as authorized by the proposed Circulation Element Amendments ("Amendments"), could require additional barricades, modifications to the existing outdoor dining parklets and streeteries, striping for bicycle/pedestrian movements, and additional wayfinding signage. The street closures would not involve substantial construction activities, ground disturbing activities, an increase in density (dwelling units), intensity (square footage), or building heights.

To allow for the proposed permanent closure of a portion of Santa Cruz Avenue and a portion of Ryans Lane and to allow for the City Council to more broadly consider additional street closures, Amendments to the General Plan Circulation Element attached hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated herein by this reference, are proposed. The proposed Amendments are generally as follows:

- Modify the text of the Main Street classification to allow for the City Council to consider partial or full street closures on a temporary, long term, or permanent basis.
- Add a Local Access Alley street classification to the Circulation Element that would also allow for the City Council to consider street closures of low volume local access public streets.

The City Council would consider potential street closures separately and each potential street closure would be considered for consistency with the General Plan Circulation Element Amendments.

These Amendments would allow the City Council discretion to review and determine whether to approve long-term or permanent closures of portions of Santa Cruz Avenue (in addition to the Central Plaza concept of the Specific Plan), and close public alleys (such as a portion of Ryans Lane) when it determines the alleys are not needed for

circulation purposes. The Planning Commission will review these Amendments to the General Plan Circulation Element and make a recommendation to the City Council, which can adopt the Amendments by resolution.

Potential Environmental Impacts

This is the first addendum to the certified Program EIR and certified SEIR prepared by the City. The Addendum evaluates whether the proposed General Plan Amendments require additional environmental review or can be considered for approval based on the certified Program EIR and certified SEIR prepared for the City's ConnectMenlo General Plan Update and Housing Element Update.

The proposed Amendments require only minor modifications to the Circulation Element which will allow the City Council to consider modifications to the City's circulation network (e.g. partial or full street closures) along Santa Cruz Avenue (classified as a Main Street) and Ryan's Lane (under proposed new Local Access "Alley" classification). The Amendments would be limited to circulation and would not allow any additional development potential (e.g. gross floor area, density) than was previously analyzed by the Program EIR and SEIR since no changes to the General Plan land use standards are proposed. The circulation Amendments would be limited to Santa Cruz Avenue (Main Street) and potentially all newly classified public Local Access (Alleys). The applicable alleys are located throughout the City; however, few of the existing Local Access streets meet the proposed Local Access (Alley) designation. Additionally, the Amendments will not increase the maximum allowable development capacity of the General Plan.

Amending the General Plan to allow the City Council to consider street closures could result in minor modifications to the City's circulation network. Santa Cruz Avenue is considered the City's "Main Street." However, within the downtown area parallel streets to the north and south of Santa Cruz Avenue (Oak Grove Avenue and Menlo Avenue) provide additional east-to-west connectivity through downtown, so that possible partial or full street closure of a portion of Santa Cruz Avenue, will not negatively affect the vehicle circulation network. The adjacent alternate routes can accommodate any minor increase in traffic, and no substantial increase in traffic noise or localized air pollution from intersection congestion on those roadways is expected that might affect commercial and residential uses along those streets. The alternate routes have been designed following "complete streets" policies supporting use by bicyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles. The potential limited increase in traffic would also not be expected to impact emergency responders (e.g. police and fire) response time. The potential closure of portions of Santa Cruz Avenue would not affect transit routes differently than the existing temporary closure, which SamTrans has been able to accommodate.

The proposed Local Access (Alley) street classification would also allow for the City Council to consider street closures of public alleys that meet the Local Access (Alley) classification criteria. Street closures on alleys could be allowed, subject to generally maintaining access to abutting properties for operations (e.g. deliveries, trash collection, etc.). Potential street closures within the Main Street or Local Access (Alley) street

classifications would be coordinated with the Menlo Park Police Department and Menlo Park Fire Protection District to ensure adequate access is maintained. Ryans Lane and the portion of Santa Cruz Avenue have been closed on a temporary basis since October 2020 and June 2020, respectively, and no negative effects have been observed, supporting these conclusions.

At the time of adoption of the General Plan Update and certification of the Program EIR, the transportation analysis considered level of service (LOS) in the impact analysis. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) no longer utilizes LOS as the metric for identifying impacts in the transportation impact analysis and now uses vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as the metric for assessing impacts. The proposed Amendments to allow for street closures within the Main Street and Alley street classifications would not be expected to increase VMT, as use of the alternate routes to travel in and out or through the downtown will not add a measurable distance to the trip. Most street closures would be expected to be located in the downtown area of Menlo Park and most vehicle trips to downtown would be accommodated in the parking along other downtown streets or in parking plazas. While it is possible that any street closures could be designed to allow for partial vehicle circulation, this analysis assumes complete closure to vehicles.

The decision to amend the General Plan Circulation Element to allow for potential street closures within the Main Street (i.e. Santa Cruz Avenue) and Local Access (Alley) street classifications would not result in an increase in potential environmental effects related to transportation, circulation, or parking. The proposed Amendments are not expected to result in much if any demolition, ground disturbing, construction activities, or operation activities not contemplated in the General Plan Update and Housing Element Update and studied in the Program EIR and SEIR. No increase in potential environmental effects to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources (including tribal cultural resources), geology, soils, or seismicity, greenhouse gases emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, population and housing, and public services and recreation, utilities and service systems would result from implementation of the proposed General Plan Circulation Element Amendments. Additionally, the City, in compliance with Senate Bill 18, notified Native American Tribal Nations, identified by the Native American Heritage Commission, of the proposed Amendments to allow for the tribes to consult with the City on the proposed Amendments. The City did not receive any requests for consultation.

The decision to amend the General Plan would not result in aesthetic impacts or land use and planning effects not contemplated in the Program EIR and SEIR. The proposed Amendments are consistent with the guiding principles of the General Plan and consistent with components of the General Plan studied in the certified Program EIR and the certified SEIR for the Housing Element Update.

Thus, the Program EIR and the SEIR examined essentially the same project that is now being considered by the City through the plan Amendments. As a result, the Amendments would have no new impacts or more severe impacts than previously discussed and analyzed in the certified Program EIR and certified SEIR.

Findings: The proposed changes to the Circulation Element of the General Plan are considered minor and will have little or no new environmental effect. No new or more severe impacts have been identified beyond those examined in the previously certified Program EIR and SEIR. CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 provides that no subsequent environmental review document is needed after an EIR has been certified for a project unless the City determines on the basis of factual evidence that one of the following has occurred:

1. Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;
2. Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or
3. New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete or the negative declaration was adopted, shows any of the following:
 - A. The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR or negative declaration;
 - B. Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR;
 - C. Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible, and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or
 - D. Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.

There have been no substantial changes in the General Plan or its circumstances since certification of the Program EIR and the SEIR. Similarly, there is no substantial new information that could not have been known when the Program EIR and the SEIR were certified. Therefore, there are no grounds for requiring additional review under CEQA Guidelines section 15162 or for the City to undertake a subsequent EIR or negative declaration.

An addendum is the appropriate documentation for these Amendments because the changes are not substantial changes and do not require major revisions to the certified Program EIR or certified SEIR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15164). An addendum does not need to be circulated for public review. This addendum will be considered by the City

Council in conjunction with the Program EIR and SEIR when taking action on the proposed General Plan Amendments.