

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

SCH NO. 2021080010
CITY OF MENLO PARK



March 24, 2023

To: State Clearinghouse
State Responsible Agencies
State Trustee Agencies
Other Public Agencies
Interested Parties and Organizations

From: David Hogan
Contract Planner
City of Menlo Park
701 Laurel St.
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Subject: Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the 1125 O'Brien Drive Project	
Lead Agency: City of Menlo Park, Planning Division	
Project Title: 1125 O'Brien Drive Project	
Project Area: Bayfront Area, City of Menlo Park, California	
Purpose of Notice and Public Review Period	
<p>Notice is hereby given that the City of Menlo Park (City), as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the 1125 O'Brien Drive Project (Proposed Project). In accordance with Section 15087 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City has prepared this Notice of Availability (NOA) to invite agencies, organizations, and interested parties to provide comments on the Draft EIR.</p> <p>The 45-day comment period required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15105(a) for the Draft EIR has been set from Friday, March 24, 2023, through Monday, May 8, 2023. Written or emailed comments on the Draft EIR are due no later than the close of the Draft EIR review period (5 p.m., Monday, May 8, 2023). However, responses would be appreciated at the earliest possible date.</p> <p>The Draft EIR is available at menlopark.gov/1125OBrienDrive. Printed copies of the Draft EIR are available for review at the Menlo Park Library at 800 Alma St., Menlo Park, and the Belle Haven Branch Library at 413 Ivy Drive, Menlo Park.</p>	
Project Location and Existing Locations	
<p>As shown in Figure 1, the Project site is north of U.S. Highway 101 in the City of Menlo Park. The Project site is approximately four acres and composed of four parcels. The Project site is currently occupied by three light industrial buildings and an existing drainage channel which flows north to the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) Hetch Hetchy utility right of way. The current project site addresses include: 1105, 1135 and 1165 O'Brien Drive and 1 Casey Court. The site is generally bounded by O'Brien Drive to the south and east, the SFPUC right of way to the north, and a warehouse to the west. In addition, Dura-Foam Roofing and Wund3rSCHOOL/Open Mind School, a small private school, are north and east of the Project site on O'Brien Drive. Further to the north are the inactive Dumbarton Rail Corridor, State Route 84, tidal mudflats and marshes along San Francisco Bay, the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, and Ravenswood Slough. Neighborhoods in East Palo Alto are located east of the Project site beyond O'Brien Drive; the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park is approximately 0.25 mile west of the Project site.</p> <p>The Project Site is zoned LS-B (Life Science Bonus), which has base - and bonus-level development regulations. The base-level development for the LS-B zone permits a maximum and average height of 35 feet for buildings and a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 55 percent, with an additional FAR of 10 percent for commercial uses at the base level. At the bonus level, in exchange for community amenities, the LS-B zone allows a maximum height of 110 feet and an average height of 67.5 feet, as well as a FAR of up to 125 percent, with an additional 10 percent for commercial uses.</p>	

Project Description

The Proposed Project would construct an approximately 131,825 gross-square-foot (gsf) building for research and development (R&D) uses as well as surface parking on two parcels. The proposed building would be located on a site consisting of three separate legal lots (1105, 1135 and 1165 O'Brien Drive), as well as an adjacent lot with a drainage ditch, that would be merged into one lot and referred to as Parcel 1 or the Building Lot. In addition, surface parking for the building would be provided on an adjacent lot addressed at 1 Casey Court and referred to as Parcel 2 or the Accessory Parking Lot.

The Proposed Project would demolish the existing buildings and construct a new 131,825 gsf, five-story building that would include R&D uses; office uses associated with the primary R&D uses; a 500-square-foot (sf) chemical storage area, also associated with the primary R&D uses; and a 2,700 gsf "grab and go" café open to the public on the ground floor. The exterior of the Building Lot would feature an entry plaza, a shuttle stop, bioretention areas, and two driveways from O'Brien Drive. The Proposed Project would provide a total of 229 parking stalls, with approximately 82 stalls in a surface accessory parking lot west of the building on Parcel 1 and the other 147 parking stalls on Parcel 2.

Upon Project implementation, there would be approximately 39,666 sf of open space provided on site. Approximately 20,873 sf of this area would be public open space, which would be concentrated along the street frontage, plaza area, and along the pathway connecting to the SFPUC right of way. The public open space would be landscaped with berms, trees, bioretention areas, and California-native vegetation, and would include trash receptacles, as well as benches and other outdoor furniture. The private open space would include the 6,600 sf roof deck with landscaped areas and seating.

The proposed building would be approximately 101-feet-tall, resulting in the average building height on the site of approximately 60.6 feet. The Proposed Project would result in the site having a total floor area of approximately 131,825 gsf and a FAR of 74 percent. Therefore, the Project Sponsor would be required to provide community amenities in exchange for bonus-level development, which would be provided consistent with the requirements of Section 16.44.070 of the City's Zoning Ordinance. In addition, to comply with the City's below market rate (BMR) requirements for commercial projects, the applicant has proposed to pay the BMR commercial linkage in-lieu fee.

Project Approvals

The following analyses and discretionary approvals by the City would be required prior to development at the Project Site:

- Certification of the EIR
- Use Permit
- Architectural Control Approval
- Lot Merger
- Heritage Tree Removal Permit
- Fiscal Impact Analysis
- Housing Needs Assessment
- Below-Market-Rate Housing In Lieu Payment
- Appraisal/Community Amenity Value Analysis

Responsible Agencies

The City requests that the following agencies review the analysis within the Draft EIR regarding information relevant to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the Proposed Project, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15086. Your agency may need to use the EIR prepared by the City when considering any permits or other approvals that your agency must issue for the Proposed Project. This list is not intended to confer responsible agency status to each listed agency.

- Bay Area Air Quality Management District
- California Department of Transportation
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board
- City/County Association of Governments
- San Mateo County Transportation Authority
- Menlo Park Fire Protection District
- San Mateo County, Environmental Health Division
- West Bay Sanitary District
- Native American Heritage Commission
- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Introduction to EIR

The Project Site is within the General Plan and M-2 Area Zoning Update (ConnectMenlo) study area. ConnectMenlo, which updated the City's General Plan Land Use and Circulation Elements and rezoned land in the M-2 Area (now referred to as the Bayfront Area), was approved on November 29, 2016. Because the City's General Plan is a long-range planning document, the ConnectMenlo Final EIR was prepared as a program EIR, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. Section 15168(d) of the CEQA Guidelines provides information for simplifying the preparation of subsequent environmental documents by incorporating by reference analyses and discussions. CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(d) states that where an EIR has been prepared and certified for a program or plan, the environmental review for a later activity consistent with the program or plan should be limited to effects that were not analyzed as significant in the prior EIR or susceptible to substantial reduction or avoidance. The Draft EIR was prepared in accordance with the terms of the settlement agreement between the cities of Menlo Park and East Palo Alto, which allows for simplification in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15168 for all topic areas, except housing and transportation. The analysis provided in the Draft EIR tiers from the ConnectMenlo Final EIR, as appropriate. The focused EIR examined the following impact areas: air quality, biological resources, cultural and tribal cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, population and housing, and transportation.

Significant Environmental Effects

The Draft EIR finds that impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions, and noise would be significant and unavoidable. The Proposed Project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions and construction noise despite the implementation of feasible mitigation measures. The Proposed Project would result in potentially significant impacts related to air quality, biological resources, cultural and tribal cultural resources, and transportation, but these impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of identified mitigation measures. Impacts related to population and housing would be less than significant.

Hazards Materials and Hazardous Waste Sites

The Cortese List is a compilation of several different lists of hazardous material release sites that meet the criteria specified in Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code. Although there are documented releases of hazardous materials on the Project Site, there are no hazardous material release sites on the Project Site that meet the criteria for inclusion on the Cortese List.

EIR Process

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15105(a), the Draft EIR will be available for public review and comment during a 45-day review period. Following the close of the public review period on May 8, 2023, the City will prepare a Final EIR, which will include responses to all substantive comments received on the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR and Final EIR will be considered by the Planning Commission in making the decision to certify the EIR and taking final action on the Proposed Project.

Public Hearing Meeting

The City of Menlo Park is hosting a public hearing for the EIR during the public comment period on April 10, 2023, during a regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting beginning at 7 p.m. or as near as possible thereafter via a virtual meeting.

The meeting link would be available with publication of the Planning Commission agenda and staff report on the city website at menlopark.gov/agendas not less than 72 hours in advance of the meeting.

All interested parties are invited to attend the meeting and provide input on the EIR. Written comments should be provided as indicated below.

Submittal of Comments

Comments on the Draft EIR are due no later than the close of the Draft EIR review period (5 p.m., Monday, May 8, 2023). However, responses would be appreciated at the earliest possible date. Please send written comments to David Hogan at the address shown below or email them to dwhogan@menlopark.gov with "1125 O'Brien Drive Project EIR" as the subject. Public agencies that provide comments are asked to include a contact person for the agency.

If you have any questions regarding the proposed Project or the EIR process, please contact the City at the contact information listed below.

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Corinna Sandmeier

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 City of Menlo Park

March 23, 2023



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Figure 1-1
Project Location
1125 O'Brien Drive Project