

NOTICE OF PREPARATION – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT



Parkline Master Plan Project
333 Ravenswood Avenue
City of Menlo Park

December 2, 2022

To: State Clearinghouse
State responsible agencies
State trustee agencies
Other public agencies
Interested organizations

From: Corinna Sandmeier
Acting Principal Planner
City of Menlo Park
701 Laurel St.
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Subject: Notice of Preparation of the Environmental Impact Report for the Parkline Master Plan Project	
Lead agency: City of Menlo Park, Planning Division	
Project title: Parkline Master Plan Project	
Project Address: 333 Ravenswood Avenue	
Introduction	
<p>The City of Menlo Park (City) is the lead agency for the Parkline Master Plan Project (Proposed Project). Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), upon deciding to prepare an environmental impact report (EIR), the City, as lead agency, must issue a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to inform trustee and responsible agencies, as well as the public, of the decision to undertake preparation of an EIR. The purpose of this NOP is to describe the Proposed Project and its potential environmental effects to those who may wish to comment about the scope and content of the information to be considered in the EIR. Agencies should comment on such information as it relates to their statutory responsibilities in connection with the Proposed Project. Agencies and the public are invited to provide comments on the scope and content of the environmental review, the potential mitigation strategies, and the Project alternatives by 5 p.m., Monday, Jan. 9, 2023.</p> <p>A description of the Proposed Project, including its location, and a discussion of the environmental factors that may be affected by development of the Proposed Project are provided below. The EIR will evaluate project-specific and cumulative impacts, identify feasible mitigation measures to reduce or avoid significant impacts, and identify a reasonable range of alternatives to the Proposed Project and their comparative environmental effects.</p>	
Scoping meeting	
<p>A public scoping session will be held as part of the Planning Commission meeting at 7 p.m., Monday, Dec. 12, 2022, or as near as possible thereafter. Consistent with Cal. Gov. Code §54953(e), and in light of the declared state of emergency, and to maximize public safety while still maintaining transparency and public access, members of the public can listen to the meeting and participate using the following methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access the live meeting in-person, at the City Council Chambers, 751 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025• Access the meeting real-time online at: zoom.us/join – Meeting ID# 871 4022 8110• Access the meeting real-time via telephone (listen only mode) at: (669) 900-6833 Regular Meeting ID # 871 4022 8110 Press *9 to raise hand to speak• Submit a written comment online up to one hour before the meeting start time: PlanningDept@menlopark.org * Please include the agenda item number you are commenting on *Written comments are accepted up to one hour before the meeting start time. Written messages are provided to the Planning Commission at the appropriate time in their meeting.	

To access the online meeting agenda, please visit menlopark.org/agendas. Trustee and responsible agencies, as well as members of the public, are invited to attend the meeting to learn more about the Proposed Project and provide input on the scope and content of the EIR through public comment. The scoping process is designed to enable the City to determine the scope and content of the EIR at an early stage.

Submitting comments

Comments regarding the appropriate scope of analysis and content for the EIR are invited from all interested parties. Please submit comments no later than 5 p.m., Monday, Jan. 9, 2023. However, we would appreciate your response at the earliest possible date. Please send your written comments to Corinna D. Sandmeier at the address shown below with “Parkline Master Plan Project EIR” as the subject. Emailed comments are preferred. Public agencies that provide comments are asked to include the name of a contact person for the agency.

Name: Corinna Sandmeier
Title: Acting Principal Planner
Department: Community Development, City of Menlo Park
Mail: 701 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025
Email: cdsandmeier@menlopark.org
Phone: 650-330-6726
City website: menlopark.gov
Project website: menlopark.gov/parkline

Project location and existing conditions

The 63.2-acre Project site is located at 333 Ravenswood Avenue (and includes 301 Ravenswood Avenue and 555 and 565 Middlefield Road) in the city of Menlo Park (as shown in Figure 1). The Project site is on Ravenswood Avenue between El Camino Real and Middlefield Road, near the Downtown Area and Menlo Park Caltrain station southwest of US 101. The Project site consists of five parcels (Assessor’s Parcel Numbers 062-390-660; 062-390-670; 062-390-730; 062-390-760; 062-390-780).

The vicinity of the Project site generally consists of residential neighborhoods and public facilities. To the north¹ along Ravenswood Avenue are single-family and multifamily residences. To the east are Menlo-Atherton High School, single-family residences, and a mix of office buildings, including the United States Geological Survey federal offices, along Middlefield Road. To the south is a mix of offices, single-family residences and multifamily residential units in the Linfield Oaks neighborhood. Across Laurel Street to the west are City Hall, Burgess Park and a child care facility. To the northeast, along Ravenswood Avenue, the Project site surrounds on three sides an existing church at 201 Ravenswood Avenue. The closest residences are immediately adjacent to the southeastern portion of the Project site.

The Project site is designated Commercial under the General Plan. The Project site is zoned “C-1(X)” (Administrative and Professional District, Restrictive). The Project site is currently governed by a Conditional Development Permit (CDP) approved in 1975, and subsequently amended in 1978, 1997, and 2004. The CDP permits up to 1,494,774 square feet of gross floor area, a maximum building coverage of 40% of the total site, a 50-foot height limit, and a maximum employee count of 3,308, among other restrictions. The existing Project site buildout consists of approximately 1,380,332 square feet of gross floor area. The CDP and zoning do not currently authorize residential uses.

The Project site includes SRI International’s research campus, which consists of 38 existing buildings totaling approximately 1.38 million gross square feet (gsf) of existing, mostly research and development (R&D) and supporting uses. Of the 38 existing buildings, one building (Building 302) is used exclusively to provide campus amenities, three buildings (Buildings R, U, W) are used exclusively for support functions, and the remaining buildings incorporate a mix of amenity, office, research and design (R&D), and supporting uses. Under current operations, the campus is not open to the public and is mostly surrounded by a security fence with limited access points. The Project site is currently improved with substantial impervious hardscape, including building roof areas, surface parking, streets and paths, which cover approximately 72% of the Project site. Many existing heritage trees are distributed across the Project site. Approximately 1,100 people are currently employed at the Project site.

¹ For descriptive purposes, true northwest is Project North with El Camino Real running in a north-south direction and Ravenswood Avenue running in an east-west direction. Compass directions in this NOP use Middlefield Road in a north-south direction and Ravenswood Avenue in an east-west direction. All references are labeled accordingly.

Project description

The Proposed Project would redevelop SRI International's research campus by creating a new office/R&D, transit-oriented campus with no net increase in commercial square footage, up to 550 new rental housing units at a range of affordability levels, new bicycle and pedestrian connections, and 25 acres of publicly accessible open space. The Proposed Project would demolish all existing buildings, excluding Buildings P, S and T, which would remain on-site and operational by SRI and its tenants. The Proposed Project would organize land uses generally into two land use districts within the Project site, including 1) an approximately 10-acre Residential District in the southwestern portion of the Project site; and 2) an approximately 53-acre Office/R&D District that would comprise the remainder of the Project site, which would include publicly accessible open space, recreational area and other public amenities. In addition, the Proposed Project would establish a separate parcel of land that is proposed to be leased (under a long-term ground lease) to an affordable housing developer for the future construction of a 100% affordable housing or special needs project which would be separately rezoned as part of the Proposed Project for up to 100 residential units (in addition to the 450 residential units proposed within the Residential District, discussed below).

The Residential District would include 450 rental residential units in three multifamily residential buildings and townhomes with a floor area ratio (FAR) of approximately 119%. The multifamily buildings would be between three and six-stories tall. The townhomes would be two-stories tall. The Residential District would incorporate 15% of new units as income-restricted to low income households or an equivalent alternative, consistent with Menlo Park's Below Market Rate housing program. The Residential District would include up to 469 parking spaces for the units within podium parking structures and surface parking areas. Three access points using existing and/or relocated driveways would be provided for the Residential District in the following locations: one entry point along Ravenswood Avenue toward the northwestern portion of the Project site and two entry points along Laurel Street (one for the multifamily residential buildings and one for the townhomes) at the southwestern portion of the Project site.

The Office/R&D District would include: (1) five new office/R&D buildings (totaling approximately 1,093,602 gsf, which would replace the same amount of gsf that would be demolished as part of the Proposed Project), (2) the three existing buildings to be retained (Buildings P, S and T) totaling approximately 286,730 gsf), (3) an approximately 40,000 gsf office amenity building, and (4) an approximately 2,000 gsf community amenity building. Total building intensity would be approximately 60% FAR. The Office/R&D District would provide approximately 2,800 parking spaces within three above-grade parking structures, surface parking areas and underground parking. Four access points using existing and/or relocated driveways would be provided for the Office/R&D District in the following locations: two along Ravenswood Avenue (toward the center of the Project site) and two along Middlefield Road (one at Ringwood Avenue and one at Seminary Drive.) The proposed buildings would be designed to accommodate either office or R&D uses. Because future tenants have not been identified, the EIR will evaluate two scenarios: a 100% office scenario and a 100% R&D scenario. Each section in the EIR will evaluate the most intense scenario for the resource area being analyzed. This will ensure that the EIR evaluates the Proposed Project's maximum potential impact, and that any future tenant mix is within the scope of the EIR.

As part of the Proposed Project, the existing 6-megawatt natural gas power plant that generates power and steam energy for the existing SRI International campus would be demolished and the entire Project site would be converted to all-electric energy usage, with the exception of two of the existing buildings that would remain (Buildings P and T) and potential backup diesel generators, in compliance with the city Reach Code. (It is possible that limited exceptions may be requested to accommodate life science uses.)

In total, the Proposed Project would result in a total of approximately 1,898,931 gsf, including approximately 1,380,332 gsf of office/R&D uses (including existing buildings to be retained) and approximately 518,599 gsf of residential uses (including 450 rental residential units, and excluding the up to 100 affordable rental residential units, whose gsf will be determined at a later date), with a total FAR of approximately 69% (not including the proposed land dedication via a long-term ground lease for future affordable or special needs housing project on the Project site.) The Proposed Project would also include approximately 25 acres of open space areas and supporting amenities, including a network of publicly accessible pedestrian and bicycle trails, open spaces and active/passive recreational areas available to the public.

The Project site is not included on any list compiled pursuant to Cal. Gov. Code § 65962.5.

Project approvals

The following City discretionary approvals/actions² would be required before development at the Project site:

- General Plan Amendment (Text and Map)
- Zoning Ordinance Amendment
- Rezoning
- Conditional Development Permit
- Development Agreement
- Architectural Control (for future Design Review)
- Heritage Tree Removal Permits
- Vesting Tentative Map
- Below Market Rate Housing Agreement
- Environmental Review

The entitlement process would allow development of either the office or R&D scenario, or a hybrid of the two, up to the maximum intensity evaluated in the EIR. In addition, as part of the development review process conducted by the City, and not as part of the environmental review, a fiscal impact analysis would be prepared, and a Water Supply Assessment (WSA) and Housing Needs Assessment (HNA). Review of the Proposed Project by the City Planning Commission would be conducted as a part of the EIR review and entitlement process. The City Council would be the final decision-making body on the requested land use entitlements (with the potential exception of architectural control reviews by the Planning Commission and heritage tree removal permits issued by the City Arborist) and certification of the EIR.

Responsible and other Agencies

The agencies listed below are expected to review the draft EIR to evaluate the Proposed Project:

- Bay Area Air Quality Management District
- California Department of Transportation
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Francisco Bay Region/San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program
- California Air Resources Board
- California Department of Toxic Substances Control
- California Public Utilities Commission
- City/County Association of Governments
- PG&E
- 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 purpose of an EIR is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the environmental effects of a proposed project. The EIR process is intended to provide environmental information sufficient to evaluate a proposed project and its potential to cause significant effects on the environment; examine methods of reducing adverse environmental impacts; and identify alternatives to the proposed project. The EIR for the Proposed Project will be prepared and processed in accordance with CEQA (Public Resources Code §§21000 et seq) and the State CEQA Guidelines. The EIR will include the following:

- Summary of the Proposed Project and its potential environmental effects;
- Description of the Proposed Project;
- Description of the existing environmental setting, potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project, and feasible mitigation measures to reduce significant environmental effects of the Proposed Project;
- Variants to the Proposed Project;
- Alternatives to the Proposed Project;
- Cumulative impacts; and
- CEQA conclusions.

² Determination of the final list of required discretionary approvals/actions would be based on the final development characteristics and site plans for the Proposed Project, which would be finalized prior to issuance of any permits or agreements.

Probable environmental effects

CEQA Guidelines §15128 states that “[a]n EIR shall contain a statement briefly indicating the reasons that various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant and were therefore not discussed in detail in the EIR.” Accordingly, the EIR will include a section for impacts found to be less than significant, including the following areas: agricultural and forestry resources, mineral resources and wildfire.

The EIR will analyze whether the Proposed Project would have a significant environmental impact related to the following areas:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems

Variants

Variants are variations of a project at the same project site, with the same objectives, background, and development controls but with additions and changes from a project, whose inclusion may or may not reduce environmental impacts. Thus, variants are distinct from “alternatives” (discussed below) insofar as CEQA requires the consideration of alternatives to avoid or lessen significant effects of a project. The EIR will include variants proposed by the Project Sponsor or the City and the description and analysis of the variants will be equal in detail to those of the Proposed Project. The EIR will describe and analyze the following variants:

- **Emergency Reservoir Variant:** This variant would be similar to the Proposed Project except it would also include an approximately 2 million gallon buried concrete water reservoir and associated facilities (including a pump station building, surge tank, well head) that would be aboveground and surrounded by a fence or screen. The area for the emergency reservoir and associated facilities would be leased by the City. The specific location of the emergency water reservoir and associated facilities within the Project site has not yet been determined, but would likely be located on the northeastern portion of the Project site.
- **Increased Residential Variant:** This variant would be similar to the Proposed Project except it would include up to 600 rental residential units, 50 more residential units than under the Proposed Project. The additional residential units would be located along Laurel Street within the Residential District. As a result, the proposed building height along Laurel Street would increase and additional subterranean parking may be required.

Alternatives

Based on the significance conclusions from the EIR, alternatives to the Proposed Project will be analyzed to reduce identified impacts. CEQA Guidelines §15126.6(e) requires evaluation of a no-project alternative. Other alternatives may be considered during preparation of the EIR. These will comply with the CEQA Guidelines, which call for a “range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project.” The EIR will discuss the process by which alternatives are identified. This includes consideration of any feasible alternatives suggested during the scoping process.

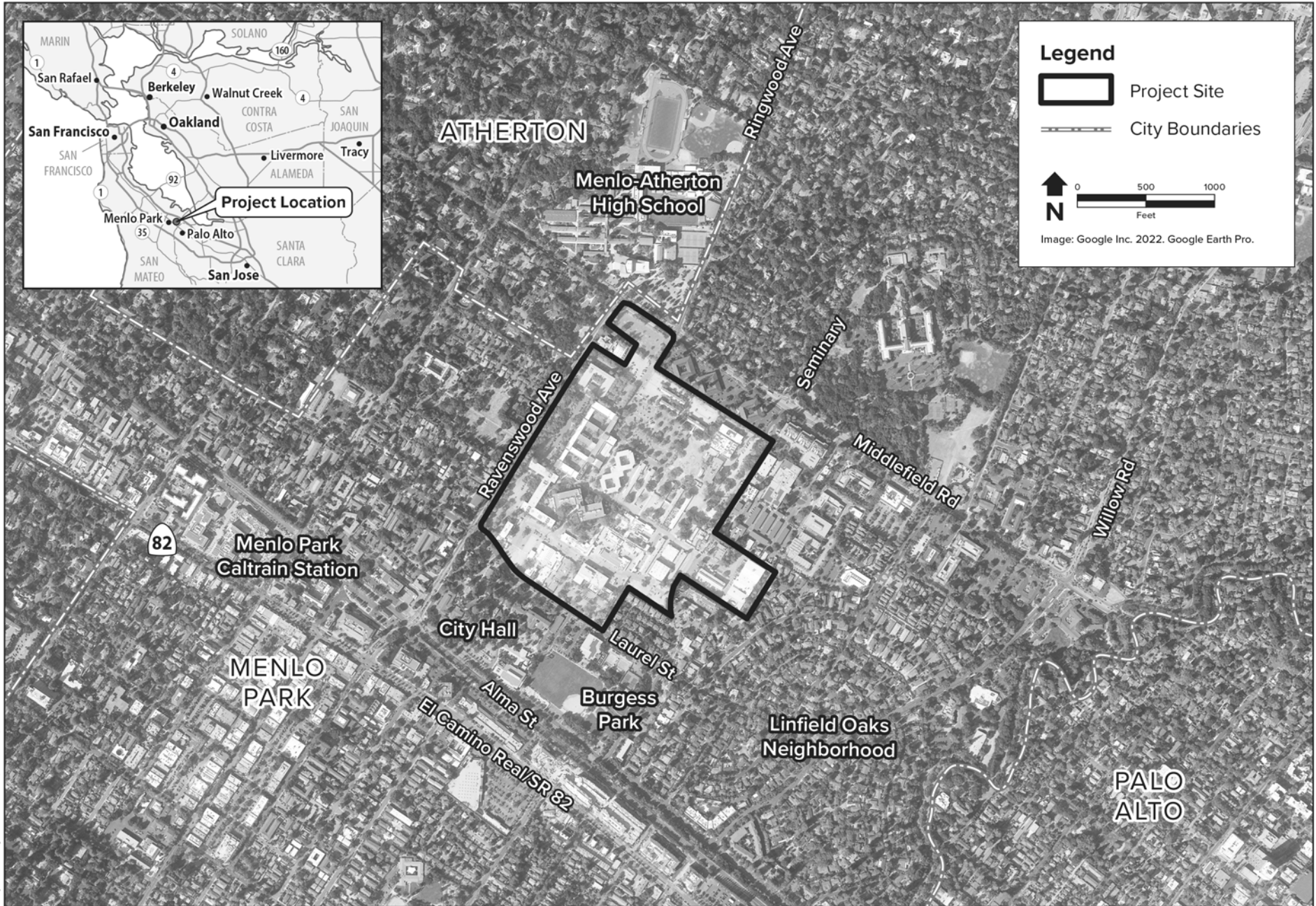
EIR PROCESS

Following the close of the NOP comment period, a draft EIR will be prepared that considers all NOP comments. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15105(a), the draft EIR will be released for public review and comment over a required 45-day review period. Following the close of the 45-day public review period, the City will prepare a final EIR, which will include responses to all substantive comments received on the draft EIR. The draft EIR, all public comments and recommendations, a list of all persons and organizations commenting on the draft EIR, all responses to comments prepared by the City, and any other information added by the City will compose the final EIR;

thereafter, the final EIR will be considered by the Planning Commission and City Council when making the decision whether to certify the final EIR and approve or deny the discretionary approvals needed for the Proposed Project.

Corinna Sandmeier

Corinna Sandmeier
City of Menlo Park
December 2, 2022



Graphics ... Project Number TK (11-17-2022) JC



Figure 1
Project Location
 Parkline Master Plan Project