

**Notice of Preparation  
of an Environmental Impact Report  
for the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan  
City of Menlo Park**

Notice is hereby given that the City of Menlo Park will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan (Specific Plan). The City of Menlo Park is requesting comments on the scope and content of this EIR.

A Scoping Session will be held on **December 15, 2009** at the Menlo Park City Council Chambers. The Scoping Session is part of the EIR scoping process during which the City solicits input from the public and other agencies on specific topics that they believe should be addressed in the environmental analysis. Written comments on the scope of the EIR may also be sent to:

**Thomas Rogers, Associate Planner  
City of Menlo Park  
Community Development Department, Planning Division  
701 Laurel Street  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
[throgers@menlopark.org](mailto:throgers@menlopark.org)**

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, comments must be received **no later than 30 days** after receipt of this notice.

**Project Location:** The Specific Plan area (project site) is located in the City of Menlo Park in San Mateo County. The project site is located along El Camino Real from Watkins Avenue in the north to San Francisquito Creek in the south. It extends east to the Caltrain right-of-way and around the Caltrain Menlo Park Station to Alma Street, and it extends west along Oak Grove Avenue, Santa Cruz Avenue and Menlo Avenue to approximately University Drive. El Camino Real is designated as State Route (SR) 82, under Caltrans jurisdiction, and is one of the primary arterial roadways and commercial corridors of the San Francisco Peninsula. Caltrain is the major commuter rail line serving the San Francisco Peninsula, and it connects Menlo Park with San Francisco to the north and San Jose and Gilroy to the south. **Figure 1** shows the location of the project site.

**Project Description:**

The El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan will establish a framework for private and public improvements on El Camino Real and in Downtown Menlo Park for the next several decades. The plan's focus is on the character and density of private infill development, the character and extent of enhanced public spaces, and circulation and connectivity improvements. It will include a strategy for implementation of public realm and other infrastructure improvements.

The overall intent of the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan is to enhance community life, character and vitality through mixed use infill projects sensitive to the small-town character of Menlo Park, an expanded public realm and improved connections across El Camino Real. The Specific Plan is the result of an extensive community engagement process, and uses as its basis the El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan, which was unanimously accepted by the City Council on July 15, 2008. The release of the Draft Specific Plan is currently targeted for early Spring 2010.

As relayed through sample graphics (**Figures 2 and 3**), the Specific Plan will:

- Retain the existing downtown “village” character by keeping buildings consistent with the existing fabric (2-3 stories) and requiring building modulation and upper story step-backs;
- Increase downtown activity, foot traffic and transit use through an enhanced public realm, mixed-use infill projects, including residential uses, and higher densities of development, particularly near the commuter rail station;
- Enhance community life through an integrated network of widened sidewalks, particularly along Santa Cruz Avenue, promenades, pocket parks and public gathering spaces;
- Enhance east-west connectivity, particularly across El Camino Real, through sidewalk extensions and other sidewalk improvements while accommodating through traffic along the arterial corridor, and enhances crossing of the railroad tracks through grade-separated pedestrian and bicycle connections; and
- Afford infill development of empty lots along El Camino Real through increased allowable densities (3-5 stories in station area and west side south of Ravenswood Avenue; 2-3 stories elsewhere) coupled with building modulation and step-back requirements.

**The EIR:** The EIR will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA *Guidelines*. The EIR will provide information sufficient to evaluate the proposed Specific Plan and its potential to cause significant effects on the environment; examine methods of reducing environmental impacts; and identify alternatives to the proposed Specific Plan. The EIR will be a program-level EIR of planned public improvements and a maximum future development potential. Future individual projects will be subject to additional environmental review, in particular of site-specific attributes (such as heritage trees). The EIR will include the following:

- Introduction
- Summary
- Project Description
- Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures
- Alternatives

- Impact Overview and Growth-Inducing Impacts
- Cumulative Impacts
- Report Preparers

**Probable Environmental Effects:** The EIR will analyze whether the proposed project would have significant environmental effects in the following areas:

- **Aesthetic Resources:** the analysis will discuss the impacts of new development in terms of height and intensity, and the potential for increased light and glare impacts on the existing setting.
- **Air Quality:** the analysis will discuss the local and regional air quality impacts from project related construction and demolition, and impacts from new development and traffic.
- **Biological Resources:** the analysis will discuss the impacts of construction and demolition activities on nesting birds, the general potential for removal of heritage and/or mature trees, and San Francisquito Creek on the southern edge of the project site.
- **Cultural Resources:** the analysis will discuss the impacts of the Specific Plan on known historic buildings, and the potential for construction and demolition activities to disturb archaeological and cultural resources.
- **Geology, Soils, and Seismicity:** the analysis will discuss the potential for construction and demolition activities to expose soils to erosion, and the Specific Plan development to expose people to seismic risk.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** the analysis will discuss the potential for the Specific Plan to generate greenhouse gases that have a significant impact on the environment, and the potential for conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.
- **Hazardous Materials and Hazards:** the analysis will discuss areas of potential soil or groundwater contamination, and the potential for construction and demolition activities to expose people to hazardous materials.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality:** the analysis will discuss the potential for the Specific Plan development to exceed the capacity of stormwater drainage systems or violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. The analysis will also discuss any impacts on San Francisquito Creek and the Atherton Channel.
- **Land Use and Planning Policy:** the analysis will discuss the potential for the Specific Plan to divide an existing community, or conflict with applicable land use policy and plans.
- **Noise:** the analysis will discuss the impacts of noise from construction and demolition activities as well as potential new activities generated by the

Specific Plan development. The analysis will also discuss the impacts of noise from the existing rail operations on the occupants of new development.

- **Population and Housing:** the analysis will discuss the potential for the Specific Plan to induce substantial population growth or displace existing housing, businesses, or people.
- **Public Services and Utilities:** the analysis will discuss the potential for the Specific Plan to result in an increase in public services such as, fire and police protection, solid waste, water supply, and wastewater disposal services.
- **Recreation:** the analysis will discuss the potential for the Specific Plan development to result in an increase in the use of existing recreational facilities to the detriment of those facilities, or the need to create new recreational facilities.
- **Transportation, Circulation and Parking:** the analysis will discuss the impacts of construction traffic and the potential for the Specific Plan development to increase traffic load and capacity on the street system and result in inadequate emergency access or parking capacity. The analysis will review the specific intersections and roadway segments listed in Exhibit A. The analysis will also examine the impacts of the Specific Plan on pedestrian/bicycle activity and transit service.

The Specific Plan is not anticipated to result in significant impacts in the following areas:

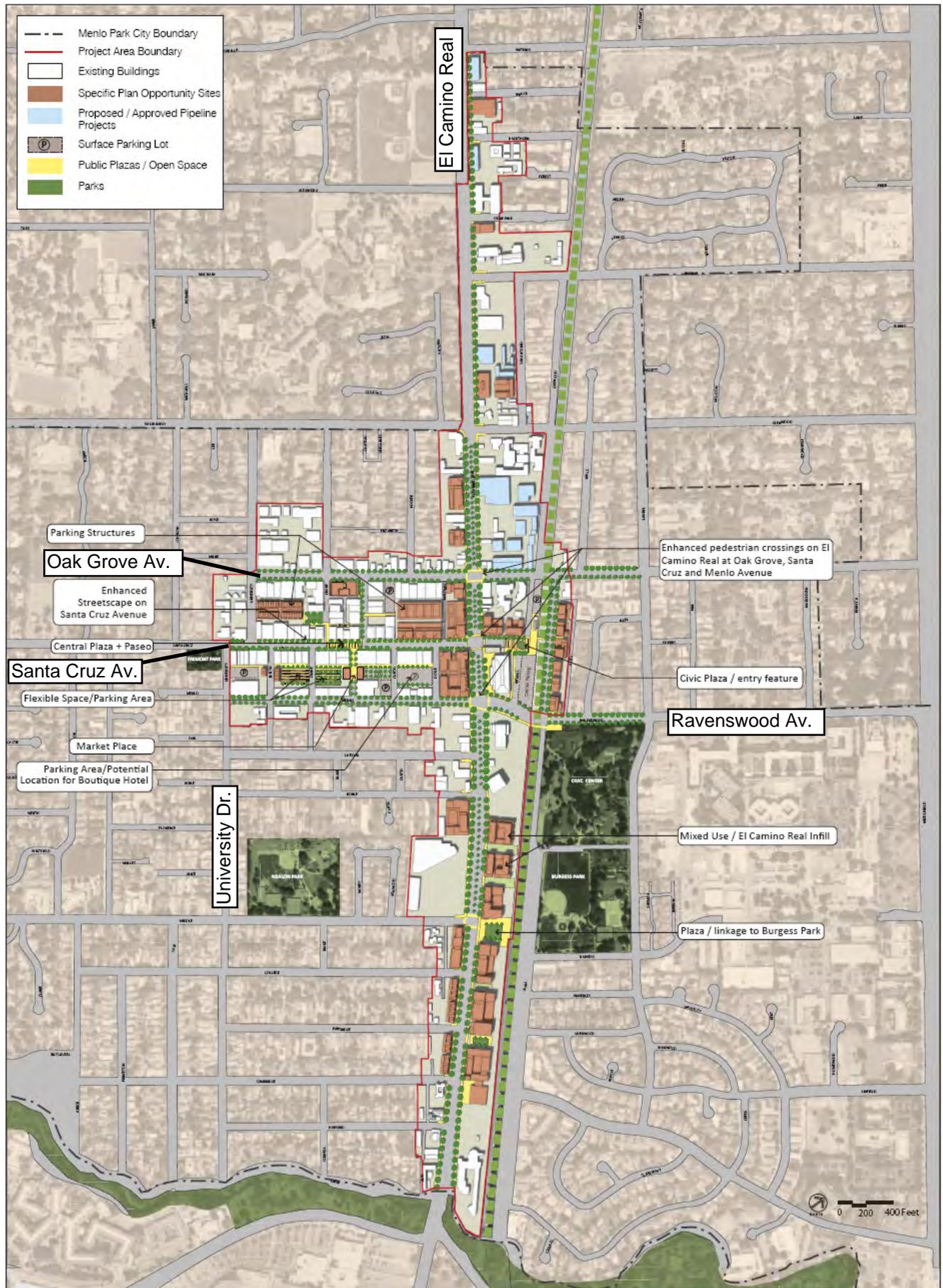
- Agricultural Resources
- Mineral Resources

The project site is an urban infill area and the above resources do not exist on the site. Detailed analysis of agricultural and mineral resources will not be included in the EIR.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas Rogers, Associate Planner  
City of Menlo Park

\_\_\_\_December 8, 2009\_\_\_\_

Date



SOURCE: City of Menlo Park





Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan

<b>N-S Street</b>	<b>E-W Street</b>	<b>Signalized</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>
El Camino Real	Atherton Ave/Fair Oaks Ln	Y	Caltrans/Atherton
El Camino Real	Encinal Ave	Y	Caltrans/Atherton/Menlo Park
El Camino Real	Glenwood Ave/Valparaiso Ave	Y	Caltrans/Atherton/Menlo Park
El Camino Real	Oak Grove Ave	Y	Caltrans/Menlo Park
El Camino Real	Santa Cruz Ave	Y	Caltrans/Menlo Park
El Camino Real	Menlo Ave/Ravenswood Aves	Y	Caltrans/Menlo Park
El Camino Real	Roble Ave	Y	Caltrans/Menlo Park
El Camino Real	Middle Ave	Y	Caltrans/Menlo Park
El Camino Real	Cambridge Ave	Y	Caltrans/Menlo Park
El Camino Real	Sand Hill Rd	Y	Caltrans/Palo Alto
Laurel St	Oak Grove Ave	Y	Menlo Park
Laurel St	Ravenswood Ave	Y	Menlo Park
University Dr	Valparaiso Ave	Y	Menlo Park/Atherton
University Dr	Oak Grove Ave	N	Menlo Park
University Dr	Santa Cruz Ave	Y	Menlo Park
University Dr	Santa Cruz Ave	N	Menlo Park
University Dr	Menlo Ave	N	Menlo Park
Middlefield Rd	Marsh Rd	Y	Atherton
Middlefield Rd	Encinal Ave	N	Atherton
Middlefield Rd	Glenwood Ave/Linden Ave	N	Atherton
Middlefield Rd	Oak Grove Ave	Y	Atherton
Middlefield Rd	Ravenswood Ave	Y	Menlo Park/Atherton
Middlefield Rd	Ringwood Ave	Y	Menlo Park/Atherton
Middlefield Rd	Linfield Dr	N	Menlo Park
Middlefield Rd	Willow Rd	Y	Menlo Park
Gilbert Ave	Willow Rd	Y	Menlo Park
Coleman Ave	Willow Rd	Y	Menlo Park
Durham St	Willow Rd	Y	Menlo Park
Bay Rd	Willow Rd	Y	Caltrans/Menlo Park
Bay Rd	Marsh Rd	Y	Menlo Park
Florence St/Bohannon Dr	Marsh Rd	Y	Menlo Park
Scott Dr	Marsh Rd	Y	Menlo Park
Orange Ave/Santa Cruz Ave	Avy Ave/Santa Cruz Ave	N	Menlo Park
Santa Cruz Ave/Alpine Ave	Sand Hill Rd	Y	Menlo Park

Roadway	Extents	
Encinal Ave	El Camino Real	Middlefield Rd
Valparaiso Ave	Delfino Way	El Camino Real
Glenwood Ave	El Camino Real	Laurel St
Oak Grove Avenue	University Dr	Middlefield Rd
Santa Cruz Ave	Alameda de las Pulgas	Merrill Way
Menlo Ave	University Dr	El Camino Real
Ravenswood Ave	El Camino Real	Middlefield Rd
Middle Ave	Olive St	El Camino Real
Oak Ave	Sand Hill Rd	Olive St
Willow Rd	Laurel St	Middlefield Rd
Olive St	Oak Ave	Middle Ave
University Dr	Middle Ave	Oak Grove Ave
Laurel St	Willow Rd	Ravenswood Ave
Middlefield Rd	Willow Rd	Ringwood Ave
Waverley St	Laurel St	Linfield Dr
Linfield Dr	Waverley St	Middlefield Rd
<p><i>Note: full analysis extents listed here. Roadways will be broken into logical individual segments as part of the Draft TIA.</i></p>		