NOTICE OF PREPARATION
INFILL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
MIDDLE PLAZA AT 500 EL CAMINO REAL PROJECT
CITY OF MENLO PARK

Date: June 22, 2016

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

From: Jean Lin
Senior Planner
City of Menlo Park
701 Laurel Street
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Subject: **Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the Infill Environmental Impact Report for the Middle Plaza at 500 El Camino Real Project**

Lead Agency: City of Menlo Park Planning Division

Project Title: Middle Plaza at 500 El Camino Real Project

Project Area: City of Menlo Park

Notice is hereby given that the City of Menlo Park (City) will be the lead agency and will prepare an Infill Environmental Impact Report (Infill EIR) for the Middle Plaza at 500 El Camino Real Project (Project). An Appendix N: Infill Environmental Checklist (Infill Checklist) has been prepared along with this Notice of Preparation (NOP), which scopes out most environmental topics that were analyzed in the Menlo Park El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report from further review. The Infill EIR will address the potential physical environmental effects for those environmental topics that have not been scoped out, as outlined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and pursuant to Senate Bill (SB) 226, Streamlining for Infill Projects. The City is requesting comments on the scope and content of the Infill EIR. The Infill Checklist is available for review at the Community Development Department and online at:

www.menlopark.org/172/500-El-Camino-Real-Project

Written comments on the scope of the Infill EIR may be sent to:

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Community Development Department, Planning Division
701 Laurel Street
Menlo Park, CA 94025
jplin@menlopark.org
Phone: 650.330.6735
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Comments are due no later than the close of the 30-day NOP review period at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 21, 2016. However, we would appreciate your response at the earliest possible date. Please send your written comments to Jean Lin at the address shown above or email to jplin@menlopark.org with "Middle Plaza at 500 El Camino Real Project Infill EIR" as the subject. Public agencies providing comments are asked to include a contact person for the agency.

PROJECT LOCATION AND EXISTING CONDITIONS: The proposed 8.4-acre Project site is located in the City of Menlo Park and is generally bounded by the Caltrain railroad tracks and a strip of parking for the adjacent retail property to the east, the Stanford Park Hotel to the south, El Camino Real to the west, and retail property to the north.[1] Downtown Menlo Park is approximately 0.3 mile northwest of the Project site. In total, the Project site contains seven existing buildings totaling approximately 70,545 square feet (sf). In addition, the Project site currently includes parking, pavement, and limited vegetative features. The Project site includes six contiguous parcels. The location of the Project site is depicted in Figure 1.

The Project site is located within the Menlo Park El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan (Specific Plan) area. The City has developed the Specific Plan to establish a framework for private and public improvements in the Plan area. The Specific Plan addresses approximately 130 acres of land and focuses on the character and density of private infill development, the character and extent of enhanced public spaces, and circulation and connectivity improvements. On June 5, 2012, the City Council certified the Specific Plan Program EIR (Program EIR).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Stanford University (Project Sponsor) is proposing to redevelop the Project site into a mixed-use development. The Project would demolish the existing commercial structures and construct up to 459,013 sf of mixed uses. In total, the Project would include three residential buildings (Residential Buildings A, B, and C), one mixed-use retail and non-medical office building (Office Building 1), two non-medical office buildings (Office Buildings 2 and 3), a publicly accessible plaza at Middle Avenue (Middle Plaza), other plazas and outdoor amenity spaces, three underground parking garages and surface parking, driveways, and landscaping. The uses at the Project site would include approximately 305,000 sf of residential uses (215 residential units), 144,000 sf of non-medical office uses, and 10,000 sf of ground floor retail uses. The Project would provide approximately 1,005 parking spaces within underground parking garages and surface parking areas, although a reduction in the number of parking spaces may be proposed pending a shared parking study to account for the proposed mixture of uses on site. The Project Sponsor's conceptual site plan is shown in Figure 2.

The publicly accessible Middle Plaza would be located at the northern portion of the Project site, at the intersection of Middle Avenue and El Camino Real. This plaza would be approximately 120 feet wide and approximately one-half acre in size. Proposed amenities in this open space would include shaded sitting areas and drought-tolerant landscaping, which could be used by the general public as well as employees and residents of the Project site.

Office Building 1 would be located on the northern edge of the Project site. Office Building 1 would consist of approximately 34,600 sf and would be a three-story building. Pursuant to Specific Plan requirements, the ground floor of Office Building 1 would contain approximately 10,000 sf of shops and cafes. Approximately 24,600 sf of non-medical office space would be located on the second and third floors above the retail space.

[1] For descriptive purposes, true northwest is Project north with El Camino Real running in a north-south direction.

Office Buildings 2 and 3 would be located on the southern edge of the Project site. Office Building 2 would be a four-story building with approximately 88,400 sf. Office Building 3 would be a three-story building with approximately 30,900 sf, and would feature a courtyard entrance and driveway access.

Residential Buildings A, B, and C would be located centrally on the Project site, between Middle Plaza and Office Building 2. The residential units would include one- and two-bedroom units, and are planned as rental apartments with priority given to eligible Stanford faculty and affiliates. These buildings would include features such as landscaped courtyards, a swimming pool, private decks, patios, and rooftop terraces. All three residential buildings would vary from three to five stories and would not exceed 60 feet in height, and building facades along El Camino Real would not exceed 38 feet in height.

The Project would be consistent with the Specific Plan's Base level development standards in the El Camino Real South-East (ECR SE) zoning district, which allows a total floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.25, up to 0.625 FAR for non-medical office uses, and up to 40 dwelling units per acre.

PROJECT APPROVALS: The following approvals would be required by the City under the Project:

- Environmental Review
- Architectural Control Review
- Variance
- Lot Line Adjustment/Lot Merger
- Heritage Tree Removal Permits
- Below Market Rate Housing Agreement

RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES: The agencies listed below are expected to review the Draft Infill EIR to evaluate the Project:

- Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD)
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)/San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program
- City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG)
- Menlo Park Fire Protection District
- San Mateo County Environmental Health Division
- West Bay Sanitary District (WBSD)

INTRODUCTION TO THE INFILL EIR: An Infill Environmental Checklist for the Project has been prepared by the City, in conformance with Section 15183.3 of the State CEQA Guidelines and Section 21094.5 of the Public Resources Code, adopted per SB 226. SB 226 was developed to eliminate repetitive analysis of effects of a project that were previously analyzed in a programmatic EIR for a planning-level decision or are substantially mitigated by uniformly applied development policies. As discussed above, the Project site is within the Specific Plan area. Since the Project site plan and development parameters are consistent with the development anticipated by the Specific Plan, the Program EIR (certified June 2012) is applicable to this Project.

It has been determined that the proposed infill Project would have effects that either have not been analyzed in the prior Program EIR, or are more significant than described in the prior Program EIR, and

that no uniformly applicable development policies would substantially mitigate such effects. Therefore, since these impacts could be significant, an Infill EIR is required to analyze those effects.

The purpose of an Infill EIR is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the environmental effects of a proposed project. The Infill EIR process is intended to provide environmental information sufficient to evaluate a proposed project and its potential to cause significant effects on the environment, and examine methods of reducing adverse environmental impacts. The Middle Plaza at 500 El Camino Real Infill EIR will be prepared and processed in accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. The Infill EIR will include the following:

- Summary of the Project and its potential environmental effects with respect to the topics addressed in the Infill EIR
- Description of the Project
- Description of the existing environmental setting, potential environmental impacts of the Project, and mitigation measures to reduce significant environmental effects of the Project with respect to the topics addressed in the Infill EIR
- Cumulative impacts with respect to the topics addressed in the Infill EIR
- CEQA conclusions

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: Based on the Infill Checklist, the following topics will be scoped out of the Infill EIR: Aesthetics, Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Air Quality other than construction health risk, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology/Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Noise other than noise impacts from vehicle traffic, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation other than intersection and roadway segment impacts; and Utilities and Service Systems. Therefore, the Infill EIR will analyze whether the Project would have significant environmental impacts in the following areas:

- Air Quality with respect to health risk from construction activities
- Noise with respect to vehicle traffic noise
- Transportation/Traffic with respect to intersection and roadway segment impacts

In order to address intersection and roadway segment impacts, a Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) will be prepared. The TIA will focus on intersections, residential and non-residential roadway segments, and Routes of Regional Significance.

The following 36 intersections will be included in the TIA:[2]

1. *El Camino Real and Encinal Avenue*
2. *El Camino Real and Valparaiso Avenue/Glenwood Avenue*
3. *El Camino Real and Oak Grove Avenue*
4. *El Camino Real and Santa Cruz Avenue*
5. *El Camino Real and Ravenswood Avenue/Menlo Avenue*
6. *El Camino Real and Live Oak Avenue*
7. *El Camino Real and Roble Avenue*
8. *El Camino Real and Middle Avenue*
9. *El Camino Real and College Avenue*

[2] State-controlled intersections are shown with *italic* type.

10. *El Camino Real and Partridge Avenue*
11. *El Camino Real and Cambridge Avenue*
12. *El Camino Real and Harvard Avenue*
13. *El Camino Real and Creek Drive*
14. *El Camino Real and Sand Hill Road*
15. *El Camino Real and Quarry Road (Palo Alto)*
16. *Southbound El Camino Real and Palm Drive (Palo Alto)*
17. *Northbound El Camino Real and University Avenue (Palo Alto)*
18. *El Camino Real and Embarcadero Road/Galvez Street (Palo Alto)*
19. Arboretum Road and Sand Hill Road (Palo Alto)
20. Middlefield Road and University Avenue
21. Laurel Street and Ravenswood Avenue
22. Middlefield Road and Willow Road
23. Middlefield Road and Ringwood Avenue
24. Middlefield Road and Ravenswood Avenue
25. Santa Cruz Avenue and University Drive (S)
26. Santa Cruz Avenue and University Drive (N) (unsignalized)
27. Middle Avenue and University Drive (unsignalized)
28. College Avenue and University Drive (unsignalized)
29. Partridge Avenue and University Drive (unsignalized)
30. Cambridge Avenue and University Drive (unsignalized)
31. Harvard Avenue and University Drive (unsignalized)
32. Encinal Avenue and Laurel Street (unsignalized)
33. Middlefield Road and Oak Grove Avenue [Atherton]
34. Middlefield Road and Marsh Road [Atherton]
35. Middlefield Road and Glenwood Avenue [Atherton] (two-way stop)
36. Encinal Avenue and Middlefield Road [Atherton] (unsignalized)

In addition, the following nine residential and non-residential roadway segments will be analyzed:

1. Middlefield Road north of Ravenswood Avenue
2. Middlefield Road south of Ravenswood Avenue
3. Ravenswood Avenue east of Laurel Street.
4. Alma Street south of Ravenswood Avenue
5. Middle Avenue west of El Camino Real
6. College Avenue west of El Camino Real
7. Partridge Avenue west of El Camino Real
8. Cambridge Avenue west of El Camino Real
9. Harvard Avenue west of El Camino Real

The environmental impacts of the Project will be measured as the change that results from the Project against "baseline" environmental conditions. For the purposes of the topics analyzed in the Infill EIR, the baseline environmental conditions for the Project include existing conditions at the release of this NOP.

EIR PROCESS: Following the close of the NOP comment period, a Draft Infill EIR will be prepared. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15105(a), the Draft Infill EIR will be released for public review and comment for the required 45-day review period. Following the close of the 45-day public review period, the City will prepare a Final Infill EIR which will include responses to all comments received on the Draft Infill EIR that raise substantive environmental questions. The Draft Infill EIR and Final Infill EIR will

be considered by the Planning Commission and City Council in making the decision to certify the Infill EIR and to approve or deny the Project.

Jean Lin, Senior Planner
City of Menlo Park

June 22, 2016
Date

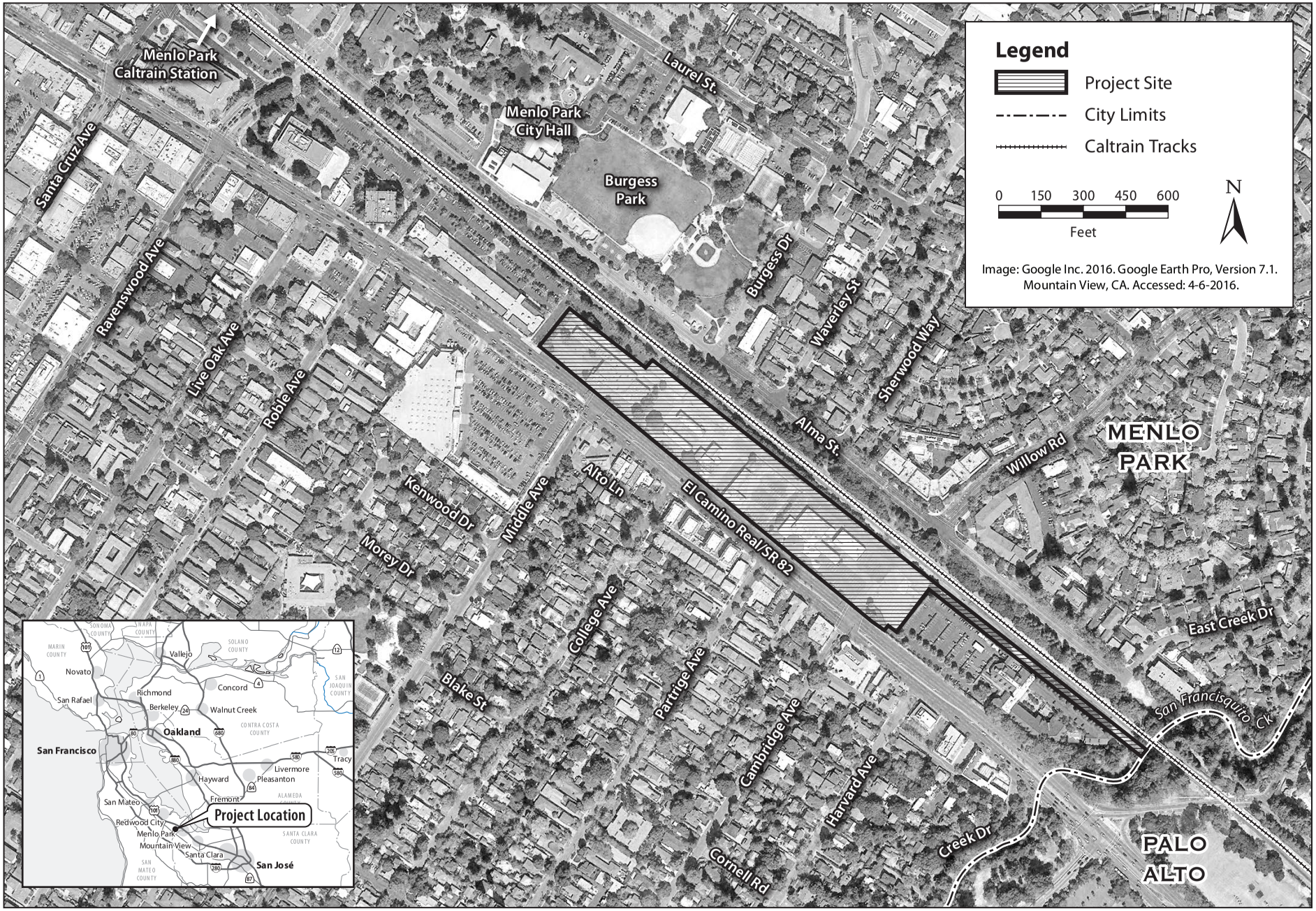

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Figure 1
Project Location
Middle Plaza at 500 El Camino Real Project

N

0 50 100 150 200

Feet

Source: Dahlin Group Architecture Planning, TGP Inc., and DES Architects Engineers Inc., 2015.

Graphics ... 00106.16 (4-6-2016)

Figure 2
Conceptual Site Plan
Middle Plaza at 500 El Camino Real Project

Source: W-Trans, 2016.

Graphics ... 00106.16 (6-17-2016)

Figure 3
Study Intersections
Middle Plaza at 500 El Camino Real Project