



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION
OF AN
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR THE
COMMONWEALTH CORPORATE CENTER PROJECT
CITY OF MENLO PARK
August 6, 2012**

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 Commonwealth Corporate Center Project. The EIR will address the potential physical, environmental effects for each of the environmental topics outlined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City of Menlo Park is requesting comments on the scope and content of this EIR.

A Scoping Session will be held as part of the Planning Commission meeting on August 20, 2012 starting at 7:00 p.m. at the Menlo Park City Council Chambers located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, 94025. 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:

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Due to the time limits mandated by State law, comments must be received no later than 5:30 p.m. September 5, 2012.

PROJECT LOCATION: The project site is located north of US 101 in the City of Menlo Park and zoned M-2 (General Industrial District). The project site consists of two parcels: the Commonwealth Site and the Jefferson Site. The Commonwealth Site, at 151 Commonwealth Drive (APN: 055-243-240), is approximately 12.1 acres. The Jefferson Site, at 164 Jefferson Drive (APN: 055-243-250), is directly adjacent to the Commonwealth Site to the north and is approximately 1.17 acres. The project site is bound to the north and west by commercial buildings, to the south by US 101, and to the southeast by the Dumbarton Rail Corridor.¹ To the east of the Dumbarton Rail Corridor is Joseph P. Kelly Park. The area is mainly urban, mixed with industrial, commercial, and residential uses. Figure 1 depicts the location of the proposed project.

¹ For the purposes of this analysis, true northeast is project north and US 101 runs in an east-west direction.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The Sobrato Organization (Project Sponsor) is proposing to demolish the existing buildings, surface parking, and landscaping on the Commonwealth Site and the Jefferson Site. The Commonwealth Site, which is in the southern portion of the project site, was formerly occupied by Diageo North America and was used as a spirits distilling, bottling, and distribution plant. Facility operations were discontinued on July 29, 2011 and the Commonwealth Site has remained unoccupied since. The Commonwealth Site consists of one single-story warehouse/manufacturing building, a tank farm, processing equipment areas, a 500,000-gallon fire suppression water tank, storage areas and warehouses, and associated parking and landscaped areas. The buildings at the Commonwealth Site total approximately 217,396 sf. The Jefferson Site, which is in the northern portion of the project site, consists of surface parking and a 20,462-square-foot warehouse/office building currently utilized for storage and light industrial uses.

The Commonwealth Site would accommodate the proposed buildings and amenities, while the Jefferson Site would provide secondary access for the Commonwealth Site as well as amenities space. The proposed project would demolish the existing buildings and associated improvements at the Commonwealth Site and the Jefferson Site and would construct two four-story office buildings with surfacing parking and landscaping. The proposed buildings, which would consist of approximately 259,919 square feet total (approximately 129,960 square feet each), would provide a flexible design for office, biotech, and/or research and development (R&D) uses.

As depicted in Figure 2, the Commonwealth Site would include a landscaped courtyard, water features, outside dining areas, signage, stormwater treatment areas, and an internalized pedestrian boulevard. The Jefferson Site would include an entrance and driveway from Jefferson Drive, a lawn area, bocce courts, picnic tables, stormwater treatment areas, and landscaping. New landscaping at the project site would make up approximately 35.6 percent of the project site. As part of the development proposal, the applicant is requesting approval to remove 12 heritage trees on the Commonwealth Site and 11 heritage trees on the Jefferson Site. The trees requested to be removed range in health from poor to fair.

The parking lot, which would be at the Commonwealth Site, would provide 866 parking stalls with a parking ratio of one stall per 300 square feet of building area. The proposed buildings would be located in the southern portion of the project site, adjacent to the main entrance off of Commonwealth Drive and would be visible from US 101. The proposed building façade would incorporate aluminum panels and high-performance glass set in aluminum frames. This façade would provide energy saving benefits for the buildings.

The proposed height of the buildings would exceed the 35-foot maximum height limit in the M-2 zone and a rezone to M-2-X (General Industrial, Conditional Development District) plus approval of a Conditional Development Permit would be required to exceed the height limit. In addition, a lot merger would be required to merge the Commonwealth Site and the Jefferson Site. The proposed structures would comply with zoning ordinance requirements pertinent to setbacks, floor area ratio and lot coverage.

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

- Conditional Development Permit (CDP)
- Rezoning from M-2 (General Industrial District) to M-2-X (General Industrial, Conditional Development District)
- Heritage Tree Removal Permits
- Lot merger
- Environmental Review

RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES: The below agencies are expected to review the Draft EIR to evaluate the proposed 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 Transportation Authority (SMCTA)
- San Mateo County Environmental Health Division
- Town of Atherton
- West Bay Sanitary District

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 Commonwealth Corporate Center Project EIR will be prepared and processed in accordance with CEQA 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 mitigation measures to reduce significant environmental effects of the proposed project;
- Alternatives to the proposed project;
- Cumulative impacts; and
- CEQA conclusions.

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The EIR will analyze whether the proposed project would have significant environmental impacts in the following areas:

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|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Aesthetics | • Hydrology and Water Quality |
| • Air Quality | • Noise |
| • Cultural Resources | • Population and Housing |
| • Geology and Soils | • Public Services and Utilities |
| • Greenhouse Gas Emissions | • Recreation |
| • Hazards and Hazardous Materials | • Transportation |

In order to prepare these sections and analyze the 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, as shown in Figure 3. The following 27 intersections will be included in the TIA:

1. Marsh Road/Bayfront Expressway
2. Marsh Road/Independence Drive
3. Marsh Road/US 101 NB Off-Ramp
4. Marsh Road/US 101 SB Off-Ramp
5. Marsh Road/Scott Drive
6. Marsh Road/Bay Road
7. Marsh Road/Middlefield Road
8. Independence Road/Constitution Drive
9. Chrysler Drive/Bayfront Expressway
10. Chrysler Drive/Constitution Drive
11. Chrysler Drive/Jefferson Drive
12. Chrysler Drive/Independence Drive
13. Chilco Street/Bayfront Expressway
14. Chilco Street/Constitution Drive
15. Willow Road/Bayfront Expressway
16. Willow Road/Hamilton Avenue
17. Willow Road/Ivy Drive
18. Willow Road/O'Brien Drive
19. Willow Road/Newbridge Street
20. Willow Road/Bay Road
21. Willow Road/Durham Street
22. Willow Road/Coleman Avenue
23. Willow Road/Gilbert Avenue
24. Willow Road/Middlefield Road
25. University Avenue/Bayfront Expressway
26. Middlefield Road/Ravenswood Avenue
27. Middlefield Road/Ringwood Avenue

In addition, 11 residential and non-residential roadway segments will be analyzed:

1. Marsh Road between Bohannon Drive and Scott Drive
2. Marsh Road between Bohannon Drive and Bay Road
3. Chrysler Drive between Constitution Drive and Bayfront Expressway
4. Chrysler Drive between Jefferson Drive and Constitution Drive
5. Chilco Street between Constitution Drive and Bayfront Expressway
6. Constitution Drive between Independence Drive and Chrysler Drive
7. Constitution Drive between Chrysler Drive and Jefferson Drive
8. Constitution Drive between Jefferson Drive and Chilco Street
9. Jefferson Drive between Chrysler Drive and driveway
10. Jefferson Drive between driveway and Constitution Drive
11. Independence Drive between Constitution Drive and Chrysler Drive

As listed above, the proposed project would be subject to review by the San Mateo County Congestion Management Program (CMP) and its requirements. As such, the following nine Routes of Regional Significance will also be evaluated:

1. SR 84: US 101 to Willow Road (NB)
2. SR 84: Willow Road to University Avenue (NB)
3. SR 84: University Avenue to County Line (SB)
4. SR 109: US 101 to Bayfront Expressway (EB)
5. SR 114: US 101 to Bayfront Expressway (EB)
6. US 101: North of Marsh Road (NB)
7. US 101: Marsh Road to Willow Road (SB)
8. US 101: Willow Road to University Avenue (NB)
9. US 101: South of University Avenue (SB)

The environmental impacts of the proposed project will be measured as the change that results from the project against “baseline” environmental conditions. The baseline environmental conditions for the proposed project include existing conditions at the release of this NOP.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS NOT LIKELY TO REQUIRE FURTHER ANALYSIS: The proposed project is not anticipated to result in significant environmental effects in the following areas:

- Agricultural or Forestry Resources
- Biological Resources
- Land Use
- Mineral Resources

The project site is fully developed in an urbanized area and located adjacent to US 101 and the Dumbarton rail corridor. As such, agricultural, forestry, biological, and mineral resources do not exist on the sites. In addition, the proposed project would require a CDP and zoning amendment to allow for an increase in height, but is otherwise consistent with land use designations. Therefore, a detailed analysis of these topics will not be included in the EIR.

ALTERNATIVES: Based on the significance conclusions determined in the EIR, alternatives to the proposed project will be analyzed that might reduce identified impacts. Section 15126.6(e) of the CEQA Guidelines requires the evaluation of a No Project Alternative. In addition to the No Project Alternative, the EIR will examine an Alternate Location Alternative and a Reduced Project Alternative. Other alternatives may be considered during preparation of the EIR and will comply with the CEQA Guidelines that 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.”

EIR PROCESS: Following the close of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) comment period, a Draft EIR will be prepared that will consider all NOP comments. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15105(a), the Draft 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 EIR which will include responses to all substantive comments received on the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR and Final EIR and will be considered by the Planning Commission and City Council in making the decision to certify the EIR and to approve or deny the project.

Rachel Grossman, Associate Planner
City of Menlo Park

August 6, 2012

Date



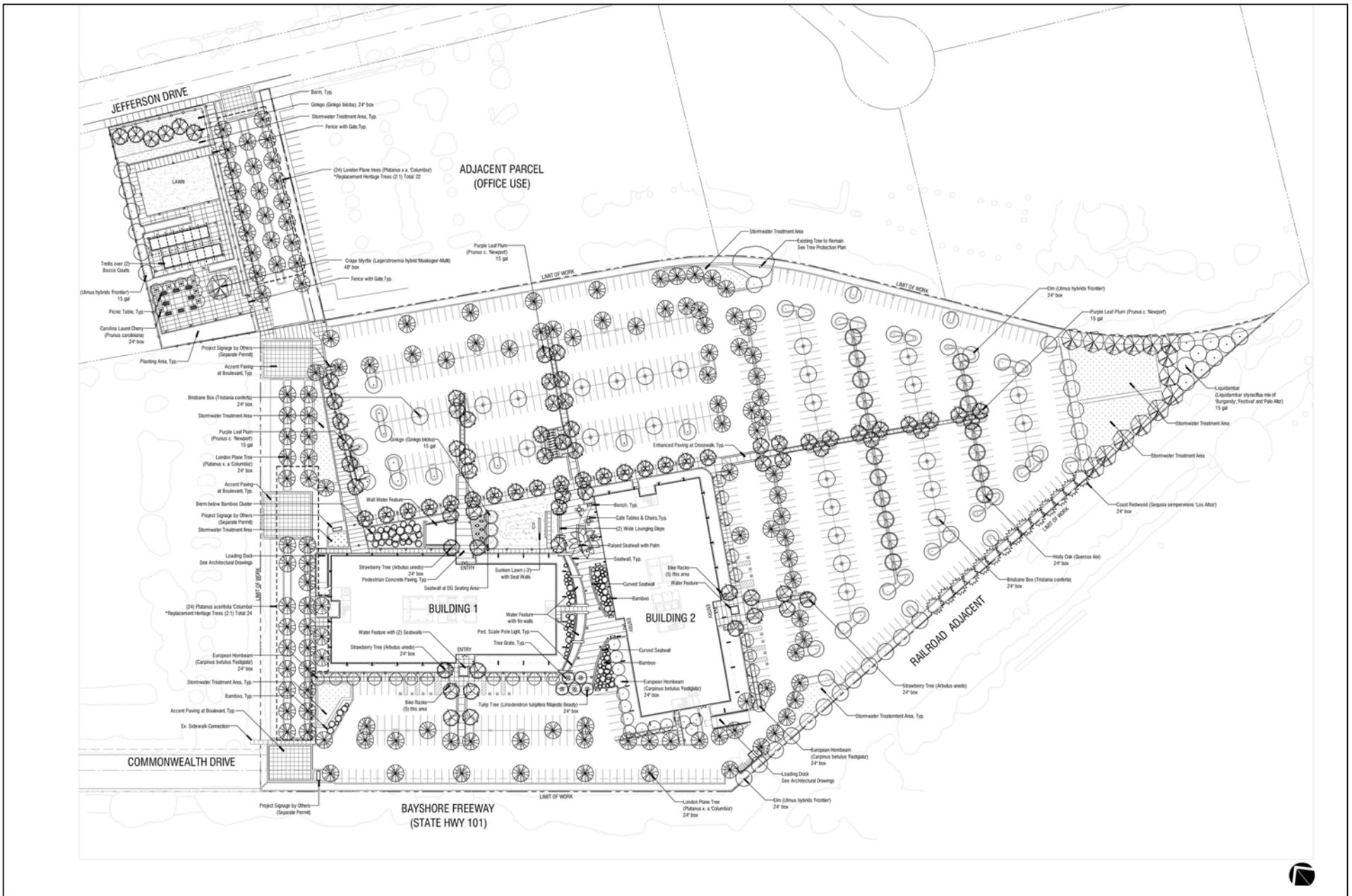
FIGURE 1
Project Location

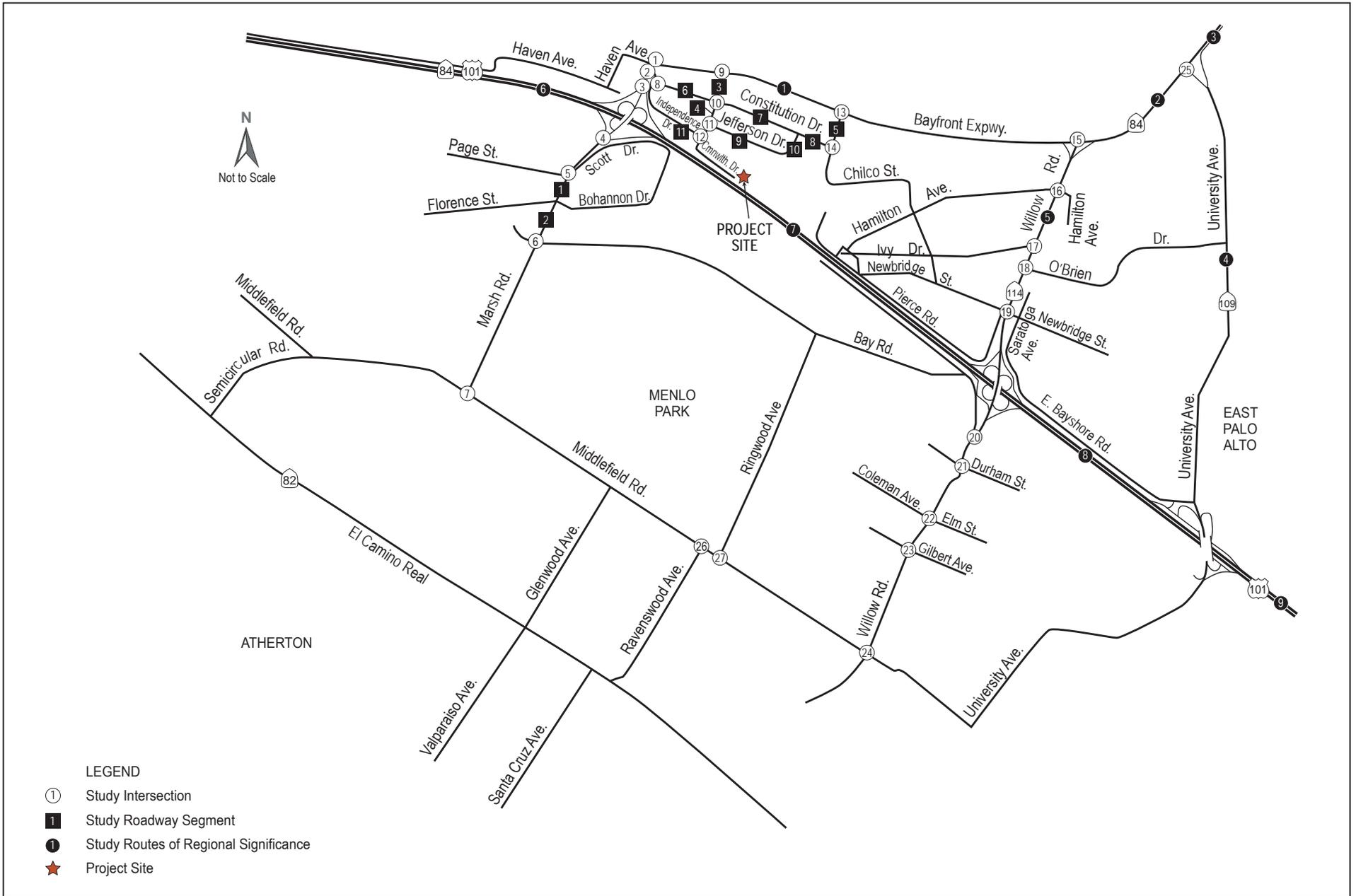
Source: Google Earth; Atkins, 2012.

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Commonwealth Corporate Center Project





Source: DKS, 2012.

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FIGURE 3
Study Intersections, Roadway Segments, and Routes of Regional Significance

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