NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE SEQUOIA UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT MENLO PARK SMALL HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT

Date: February 19, 2016

To: California State Clearinghouse, Ccalifornia Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) responsible and trustee agencies, federal agencies, San Mateo County Clerk, and interested individuals and organizations

Subject: **Notice of Preparation for the Menlo Park Small High School Project Environmental Impact Report (EIR)**

Lead Agency: Sequoia Union High School District - 480 James Avenue, Redwood City, CA 94062

Applicant: Same as Lead Agency

Project Location: 150 Jefferson Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025

Project Description: A brief description of the project, including its location and probable environmental effects, is attached. An Initial Study was not prepared for the project because the Sequoia Union High School District (SUHSD) has determined that an EIR will be prepared for the project.

The purpose of this Notice of Preparation (NOP) is to request comments on the scope and content of the environmental review the SUHSD will conduct on its Menlo Park Small High School Project from state responsible and trustee agencies, federal agencies, and any other person or organization concerned with the environmental effects of the project. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15082 (b), the SUHSD is providing a 30-day period to respond to this NOP. **Please send your written response by the earliest possible date, but no later than 5 PM on March 25, 2016 to Mr. Matthew Zito, Chief Facilities Officer, 480 James Avenue, Redwood City, CA 94062 or to smallhighschool-eir@seq.org (enter "Menlo Park Small High School NOP" in the 'Subject' line).** Agency responses should include the name of a contact person at the agency. Project information, including this NOP, is available on the SUHSD's website: www.seq.org.

Signature: Matthew S. Zito Date: 02/19/16

Title: Chief Facilities Officer

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MENLO PARK SMALL HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The SUHSD is a grade 9 – 12 school district comprised of four comprehensive high schools, a model continuation high school, other specialized programs and services, and four charter schools. The SUHSD currently serves approximately 8,640 students in total; however, demographic forecasts completed in January 2016 indicate that student enrollment in the SUHSD is likely to reach a minimum of approximately 9,200 students by 2020. In light of this projected growth, the SUHSD recently added new classrooms and facilities to existing high school campuses and has acquired property for development of a new, small high school in the northern part of the City of Menlo Park in San Mateo County (see Figure 1).

Project Location and Site Description

The proposed high school would be located at 150 Jefferson Drive in the City of Menlo Park (37°28'56" north latitude and 122°10'26" west longitude). The project site is an approximate 2.1 acre parcel of developed land (Assessor's Parcel Number 055-243-030) within an area of Menlo Park that is transitioning from 1960's and 1970's industrial / warehouse land uses to newer, corporate campuses and mixed biotechnology, commercial, office, and other land uses. The existing industrial / warehouse area is generally bordered by Bayfront Expressway (State Route 84) on the north, the Dumbarton rail corridor on the east, U.S. Highway 101 on the south, and Marsh Road on the west. Access to the area is limited by these major roadways and features (see Figure 2). The proposed school site currently contains an approximately 44,000 square-foot building that is the corporate headquarters and sales office for a cable and cable assemblies business (Bay Associates Wireless Technologies). The site also includes parking and landscaping areas. In general, 150 Jefferson Drive is surrounded by commercial and warehouse properties, some of which are vacant, on Constitution Drive (north of the site), Independence Drive and Chrysler Drive (west of the site), and Commonwealth Drive (south of the site; see Figure 2). The City of Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood is approximately 0.4 miles southeast of the site (across the Dumbarton rail corridor) and the City's Suburban Park / Lorelei Manor/ Flood Park neighborhood is approximately 0.2 miles south of the site (across Highway 101; see Figure 2).

Preliminary site investigations at 150 Jefferson Drive have identified chemicals of potential concern (petroleum hydrocarbons and volatile organic compunds) in soil, subsurface soil vapor, and/or ground water samples collected at the site that require further evaluation. On October 29, 2015, the SUHSD and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Schools Division entered into an Environmental Oversight Agreement related to preparation of a Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) report (DTSC Site Code 204273; Envirostor ID 60002163). The SUHSD will be submitting a draft PEA report to DTSC for review and will make the document available for public comment as part of the PEA process. If required by DTSC, SUHSD will perform additional site investigation and/or remedial measures under DTSC oversight. The EIR will present information on the PEA report and any additional completed site investigations, as well as information on potential remedial activities (if necessary).

Project Components

The proposed project is intended to alleviate increases in the SUHSD's existing and projected student enrollment, and is planned to be operational in time for the 2018-19 school year.

The project would demolish and replace the existing facilities at 150 Jefferson Drive with a new small high school with capacity for 400 students and 35 faculty and staff. The SUHSD would also make other improvements to existing site parking and landscaping areas and site utilities / utility connections. The new high school building would be a three-story building containing approximately 40,000 gross square feet of building space (see Figure 3). The conceptual site plan also includes an outdoor learning amphitheater (fronting Jefferson Drive). Student loading an unloading would occur primarily on the interior of the site, off of Jefferson Drive. The conceptual site plan also includes bicycle racks and on-site parking spaces distributed along the site's southern and western perimeter. The SUHSD anticipates the school would be in session from approximately 8:15 or 8:30 AM to 3:30 or 3:45 PM during the traditional school year, with summer school offerings as well.

Due to the project's location near Facebook and other technology company campuses, as well as the outcome of parent and student surveys, the SUHSD anticipates the new school's curriculum could include Career Technical Education (CTE) classes, linked learking, and academic content focused on technology, design, and engineering skills in order to prepare students for pursuing both college enrollment and professional careers. Accordingly, the proposed building will house learning studios, science, technology, engineer, and mathematics (STEM) labs, administration offices, conference rooms, a workroom, food service, and a student center/dining area. The new building will feature exhibition and collaborative spaces, as well as flexible common spaces that serve more than one purpose.

As part of the project, the SUHSD may enter into a partnership with the San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD) with the the goal to round out the offering of content-specific high school courses that will provide students with the practical and theoretical knowledge to apply to work-based learning environments. The SMCCCD may also use the high school to provide community college courses several nights a week.

The new school would be open to all SUHSD students; however the SUHSD anticipates the school would primarily serve students from the southern part of the SUSHD (i.e., Redwood City, Menlo Park, and East Palo Alto). Construction is anticipated to begin in the first quarter of 2017, with the target date for opening the new school set for August 2018. Initial enrollment in 2018 is anticipated to be approximately 100 students, with the school reaching full capacity by the 2021-22 school year (i.e., when the initial freshman class of 2018 will be seniors).

Probable Environmental Effects

The Menlo Park Small High School Project is intended to support the forecasted increase in student enrollment within the SUHSD and would result in the demolition of existing commercial facilities and the construction of new school facilities. The SUHSD is preparing an EIR for its proposed Menlo Park Small High School Project because the project may have the potential to result in one or more significant environmental effects, including potential effects on and/or from, but not limited to, hazards and hazardous materials and traffic.

Demolition and construction activities would occur at an existing developed land parcel that contains no agricultural, forestry, or mineral resource lands, and the forecast in enrollment growth throughout the SUHSD is based, in part, on regional population growth and existing enrollment at elementary schools that feed into the SUHSD; enrollment growth in the SUHSD is not a result of the project itself. Accordingly, the project would not result in significant environmental effects to agricultural and forestry resources, mineral resources, population and housing, or recreational facilities.

Traffic Impact Analysis

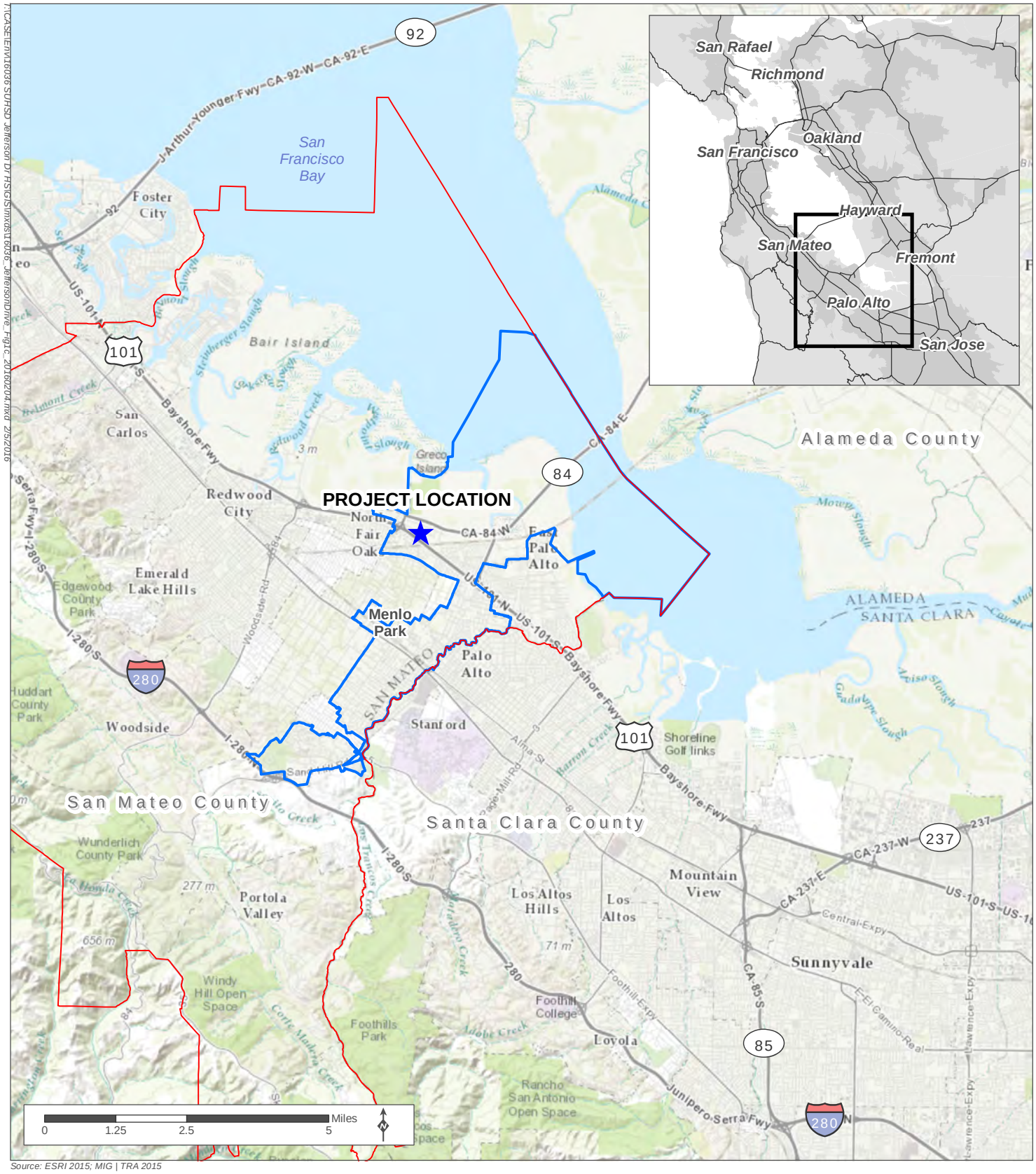
The EIR will present the findings of a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) report prepared for the project by a qualified transportation engineering firm. The purpose of the traffic analysis is to satisfy the requirements of the City of Menlo Park, the City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG) of San Mateo County, and the requirements of CEQA. The study will determine the traffic impacts of the proposed school project on the key intersections in the vicinity of the site during the weekday AM and PM peak hours of adjacent street traffic (7-9 AM and 4-6 PM, respectively), which would coincide with the school peak hours. In addition, the SUHSD anticipates a freeway analysis will not be required for the project since the project is not anticipated to add traffic to the adjacent freeway segments representing one percent (1%) or more of the freeway's capapacity; however, study intersections would include the Highway 101 on-ramps (northbound and southbound) at Marsh Road. The EIR's analysis of traffic issues would also consider related issues, such as student drop-off/pick-up activities, and parking supply as appropriate.

The TIA would rely upon recent turning movement counts provided by the appropriate jurisdictional agency and/or collect new turning movement counts as needed. The distribution and assignment of the project trips will be based on a potential school attendance pattern developed from a similar small high school within the SUHSD, as well as projected school service area information, the assumptions used in the City of Menlo Park's TIA Guidelines, the prevailing travel patterns on the adjacent roadway network, abutting land uses, travel time characteristics and knowledge of the study area.

The TIA will analyze the following scenarios:

1 Existing Conditions
2 Existing + Project Conditions
3 Background Conditions (existing conditions + approved project trips)
4 Project Conditions
5 Cumulative Conditions
6 Cumulative + Project Conditions

The TIA and the EIR will also discuss: trip generation and distribution; study intersection traffic analysis; study analysis periods and methodology; arterial and collector streets assessment; site plan and parking evaluation; pedestrian, bicycle, and transit conditions; planned transportation improvements; and mitigation measures, as necessary. The TIA would be provided as an appendix to the EIR.



Source: ESRI 2015; MIG | TRA 2015

★ Project location

Sequoia Union High School District

Menlo Park city boundary

Figure 1 Project Location

Menlo Park Small High School Project NOP

MIG | TRA ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Source: ESRI 2016, MIG|TRA 2016

Rail line
Project boundary
City boundaries

Figure 2 Project Site Aerial

Menlo Park Small High School Project NOP

Figure 3 Conceptual Site Plan

Menlo Park Small High School Project NOP