



NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

TO: State Clearinghouse, Responsible & Trustee Agencies, and Other Interested Parties
DATE: April 15, 2022
SUBJECT: **Notice of Preparation of Supplement Environmental Impact Report (SEIR)**
Notice of SEIR Scoping Meeting on Monday, May 9, 2022
LEAD AGENCY: City of East Palo Alto
PROJECT TITLE: Ravenswood Business District/4 Corners Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)
Specific Plan Update
PROJECT AREA: City of East Palo Alto, Ravenswood Business District

Notice is hereby given that the City of East Palo Alto (City) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for the Ravenswood Business District/ 4 Corners Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Specific Plan Update. The project location, project description, and the potential environmental effects that will be evaluated in the SEIR are described below. Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines (14 C.C.R. § 15060(d)), the City has determined that a SEIR is required for the project tiered from the certified 2012 Ravenswood/4 Corners TOD Specific Plan Final EIR (SCH#2011052006).

The City is requesting comments and guidance on the scope and content of the SEIR from interested public agencies, organizations and the general public. With respect to the views of Responsible and Trustee Agencies as to significant environmental issues, the City needs to know the reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures that are germane to each agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the project. Responsible agencies may need to use the SEIR prepared by the City when considering permitting or other approvals for the project.

We would appreciate your response at the earliest possible date. As mandated by state law, comments on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) are due no later than the close of the NOP review period on **Monday, May 16, 2022, at 4 PM**. Please mail or email your written comments to City at the address shown below. Public agencies providing comments are asked to include a contact person for the agency.

LEAD AGENCY CONTACT:

City of East Palo Alto, Planning Division
1960 Tate Street (Attn: RBD Project)
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
rbd@cityofepa.org

A digital copy of this NOP and additional detail about the project can be viewed at:

<https://www.cityofepa.org/planning/page/ceqa-notices> or
<https://www.cityofepa.org/planning/page/ravenswood-business-district-4-corners-specific-plan-update>

An EIR scoping meeting will be held by the Planning Commission at a regularly scheduled meeting on:

May 9, 2022, at 7PM

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this meeting will be held virtually. Members of the public and public agencies may participate remotely. For access information, please see page 6 below.

INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of an Environmental Impact Report (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 consider alternatives to a proposed project.

A supplement to the Ravenswood Business District/4 Corners TOD Specific Plan EIR, (certified in 2013), will be prepared to evaluate the environmental impacts of additional development to be allowed within Ravenswood Business District/4 Corners TOD Specific Plan Update (see project description below). SEIRs need contain only the information necessary to make the previous EIR adequate for the project as revised (per the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15163) and the Ravenswood Business District/4 Corners TOD Specific Plan SEIR will evaluate impacts related to key environmental resource topics. The Ravenswood Business District/4 Corners TOD Specific Plan SEIR will be a programmatic EIR. It is the intent that subsequent environmental review for future individual projects within the Specific Plan area would tier from this SEIR.

PROJECT LOCATION:

The approximately 350-acre Ravenswood Business District/4 Corners TOD Specific Plan area is located in the northeastern area of East Palo Alto, in southern San Mateo County.

The project site is generally bounded by the City Limits/Union Pacific Railroad tracks to the north, Weeks Street or Runnymede St to the south, University Avenue and Gloria Way to the west, and the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve and Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve to the east. Existing development within the Specific Plan area includes residential, retail, medical office, light and heavy industrial, and institutional land uses. University Village, a single-family neighborhood immediately east of University Avenue, is located within the Specific Plan area (no land use changes are proposed for this neighborhood). Regional, vicinity, and aerial maps of the project site are shown on Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3, respectively.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The current Ravenswood Business District /4 Corners TOD Specific Plan, approved in 2013, serves as a guide for development and redevelopment in the Specific Plan area and provides a policy and regulatory framework by which development projects and public improvements are reviewed. Additional information on the Ravenswood Business District/4 Corners TOD Specific Plan Update can be found on the City's project page: <https://www.cityofepa.org/planning/page/ravenswood-business-district-4-corners-specific-plan-update>

The current Specific Plan allows for development of up to 1.268 million square feet of office uses, 351,820 square feet of industrial or research and development uses, 112,400 square feet of retail uses, 61,000 square feet of civic/community uses, 835 housing units (816 multifamily, 19 single-family). As of the date of this NOP,

approximately 10 percent (140,650 square feet) of office uses, 40 percent (25,000 square feet) of civic/community uses, and 20 percent (168 units) of residential uses have been constructed or entitled.

Table 1: Existing Plan and Development to Date							
	Office (s.f.)	R&D/Lab (s.f.)	Light Industrial	Retail (s.f.)	Civic (s.f.)	Amenity (s.f.)	Housing Units
Allowed Under Existing Specific Plan	<u>1,268,500</u>	<u>175,910</u>	<u>175,910</u>	<u>112,400</u>	<u>61,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>835</u>
Constructed/Built	32,650	0	0	0	25,000	0	0
Entitled	108,000	0	0	0	0	0	168
Subtotal	140,650	0	0	0	25,000	0	168
<i>Remaining from Existing Plan Allocation</i>	<i>1,127,850</i>	<i>175,910</i>	<i>175,910</i>	<i>112,400</i>	<i>36,000</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>667</i>

The proposed update to the Ravenswood 4/Corners TOD Specific Plan (Plan) would **increase the total amount of development allowed within the Specific Plan area** by increasing the maximum square footages for office, research and development/life science, light industrial, civic/community, tenant amenity, and the total number of residential units allowed to be developed within the Specific Plan area. The SEIR will evaluate two scenarios for non-residential development consisting of 2.82 million square feet of office and Research and Development (R&D) and 3.35 million square feet, respectively. The SEIR will also evaluate two scenarios for residential development consisting of 1,350 residential units and 1,600 residential units, respectively. The project will also include comprehensive utility, infrastructure, transportation, and sea level rise improvements. Therefore, this SEIR is seeking to environmentally clear a cumulative amount of development that is greater than the existing Specific Plan. The future exact allocation of that development will be determined by project-specific applications and approvals but will not exceed the total under cleared this SEIR.

The project will include adoption of amendments to the East Palo Alto General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, changing certain existing land use designations in the Plan Area and updating existing or establishing new development standards to replace some of the current zoning provisions applicable to the Plan Area. These amendments must be completed to ensure consistency between the Specific Plan, General Plan, and Zoning Ordinance. There would be no change in the Specific Plan area boundaries.

Compared to the existing Plan, for some land use designations increased intensity and height may be allowed, while in others, the allowed maximum intensity and height may be decreased. Under both Buildout Scenarios that comprise the 'project,' all proposed increases in non-residential development square footage would occur on parcels within the Plan Area that currently allow such non-residential land uses. In contrast, under the project, residential uses are proposed to be allowed in more zones/parcels compared to the existing Plan.

Table 2: Development Under Scenarios #1 and #2

	Non-Residential (square feet)						Housing Units			
	Office/ R&D	Office	R&D/ Light Industrial or Flex		Retail	Civic/ Comm	Tenant Amenity	All	Multi- family	Single- Family
Allowed Under Existing Plan	n/a	1,268,500	351,820		112,400	61,000	0	835	816	19
<i>Reallocation</i>		Office	R&D/Lab	Industrial						
"No Project" Scenario	1,444,410	1,268,500	175,910	175,910	112,400	61,000	0	835	816	19
Buildout Scenario #1 ("Reduced")	2,824,000	1,835,600	988,400	250,000	112,400	154,700	43,870	1,350	1,270	80
<i>Net Change #1</i>	+1,379,590	+567,100	+812,490	+74,090	0	+93,700	+43,870	+515	+454	+61
Buildout Scenario #2	3,335,000	2,167,750	1,167,250	300,000	112,400	154,700	53,500	1,600	1,472	128
<i>Net Change #2</i>	+1,890,590	+899,250	+991,340	+124,090	0	+93,700	+53,500	+765	+656	+109

SEIR ANALYSIS:

The SEIR will assess both project scenarios and the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts on key environmental resource topics outlined in the CEQA Environmental Checklist (CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G) and listed below. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

- *Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions.* An Operational Air Quality (e.g., criteria pollutants) and GHG Assessment will be completed for the Specific Plan Update SEIR Buildout Scenarios. A Construction Health Risk and Construction Criteria Pollutant Assessment will be required for project-specific tiering for specific development projects when detailed information about construction activity is known.
- *Archaeological/Cultural Resources.* An updated archaeological review and sensitivity map will be completed for the Specific Plan Update SEIR. An Archaeological Resources Assessment will be required for project-specific tiering for specific development projects located within an Archaeological Sensitivity Zone.
- *Biological Resources.* A Biological Assessment will be completed for the Specific Plan Update SEIR. The report will address any potential impacts to biological resources in the Plan area and identify mitigation measures required for future individual projects. The assessment will include an updated database search for special status wildlife species and rare plants that may occur in the Plan area. Results of the Specific Plan Update Biological Assessment will determine further site studies that would be required for project-specific tiering for development projects.
- *Geology and Soils.* The Specific Plan Update will identify soil types and faults across the Plan Area, as well as a general description of geologic and seismic conditions. Project-specific Geotechnical Reports will be required for each individual site at the time specific developments are proposed.
- *Hazards and Hazardous Materials.* A Geotracker/EnviroStor search will be completed to identify any contaminated sites within the Plan area. Specific development projects- will be required to address

hazardous materials as applicable in greater detail such as through preparation of an Environmental Site Assessment.

- *Hydrology and Water Quality.* The Specific Plan SEIR will add any relevant new data as necessary (e.g., Sea Level Rise/flood plain maps, Safer Bay levee alignment and design, FEMA 2.0 data). The analysis of specific development projects will tier from the Specific Plan SEIR based on information provided by project engineers.
- *Noise/Vibration.* A Noise Assessment will be prepared for Specific Plan Update, including an operational (traffic) noise analysis, development of performance standards for operational mechanical equipment, and analysis of standard construction noise and mitigation measures required for future specific development projects. The analysis of specific development projects will tier from the Specific Plan SEIR, with supplemental noise analysis to be prepared for projects with the potential to generate substantial noise during construction and/or operation that differs from the assumptions used in the SEIR's analysis.
- *Transportation.* The cumulative traffic study for the Specific Plan Update SEIR will include a vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) analysis and a level of service (LOS) analysis for the Plan Buildout Scenarios presented above and identify the roadway improvements required. Additional project-specific analysis will be required at the time of future development projects, the extent of which will depend on the results of the Specific Plan Update analysis.
- *Utilities and Service Systems.* An updated Utility Study including Water Supply Assessment, Sewer Assessment, and Storm Drainage Assessment will be prepared for the Specific Plan Update, which will identify any deficiencies or infrastructure improvements necessary.

Alternatives: In addition to the evaluation of two scenarios for office/R&D (2.82 million and 3.35 million s.f. of office/R&D, respectively) and two scenarios for housing (1,350 and 1,600 units, respectively), the SEIR will examine alternatives to the proposed Plan Update including a “No Project” alternative (which would represent full buildout of the existing Specific Plan of approximately 1.4 million s.f. of office/R&D). Additional alternatives may be generated depending on the impacts identified; other alternatives that may be discussed could include an alternative Plan configuration. Alternatives evaluated will be chosen based on their ability to reduce or avoid identified project impacts while achieving most of the identified project objectives.

Cumulative Impacts: The SEIR will address the potentially significant cumulative impacts of the project when considered together with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the project area.

In conformance with the CEQA Guidelines, the SEIR will also include the following information: 1) consistency with local and regional plans and policies, 2) growth inducing impacts, 3) significant unavoidable impacts, 4) significant irreversible environmental changes, 5) references and organizations/persons consulted, and 6) SEIR authors.

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING:

This scoping session will be an agenda item of a scheduled session of the Planning Commission on Monday, May 9, 2022. The City Council for the City of East Palo Alto has adopted a resolution making the AB 361 findings necessary to continue virtual public meetings for the City Council and City Advisory Bodies During the COVID-19 State of Emergency. To reduce the spread of Covid-19, this meeting will be held by virtual teleconference/video conference only.

Members of the public and public agencies are invited to view and participate in this virtual gathering to provide comments regarding the scope and content of the SEIR. Members of the public can find information and may provide comments by signing up on the City's meeting page at <http://eastpal Alto.iqm2.com/Citizens/Default.aspx> or by attending the meeting live via Zoom and using the "RAISE HAND" feature when the Chair or Planning Clerk calls for public comment. Project questions and comments can also be sent to the contact information listed above.

The Monday, **May 9, 2022** virtual Planning Commission meeting will be held online at 7:00 pm and can be accessed via the Zoom meeting link listed below. In addition, an agenda packet, which includes meeting links, will be available no later than the Friday before the meeting date at the following: http://eastpal Alto.iqm2.com/Citizens/Detail_Meeting.aspx?ID=1049. Members of the public may provide comments by email to rbd@cityofepa.org.

The length of the emailed comments should be within the three minutes customarily allowed for verbal comments, which is approximately 200 to 250 words. To ensure that your comment is received and read to the Planning Commission for the appropriate study session agenda item, please submit your email no later than 4:00 p.m. on May 9 2022. The City will make every effort to read emails received after that time but cannot guarantee that such emails will be read into the record. Any emails received after the 4:00 p.m. deadline that are not read into the record will be provided to the Planning Commission after the meeting and will be included into the project record for the preparation of the SEIR.

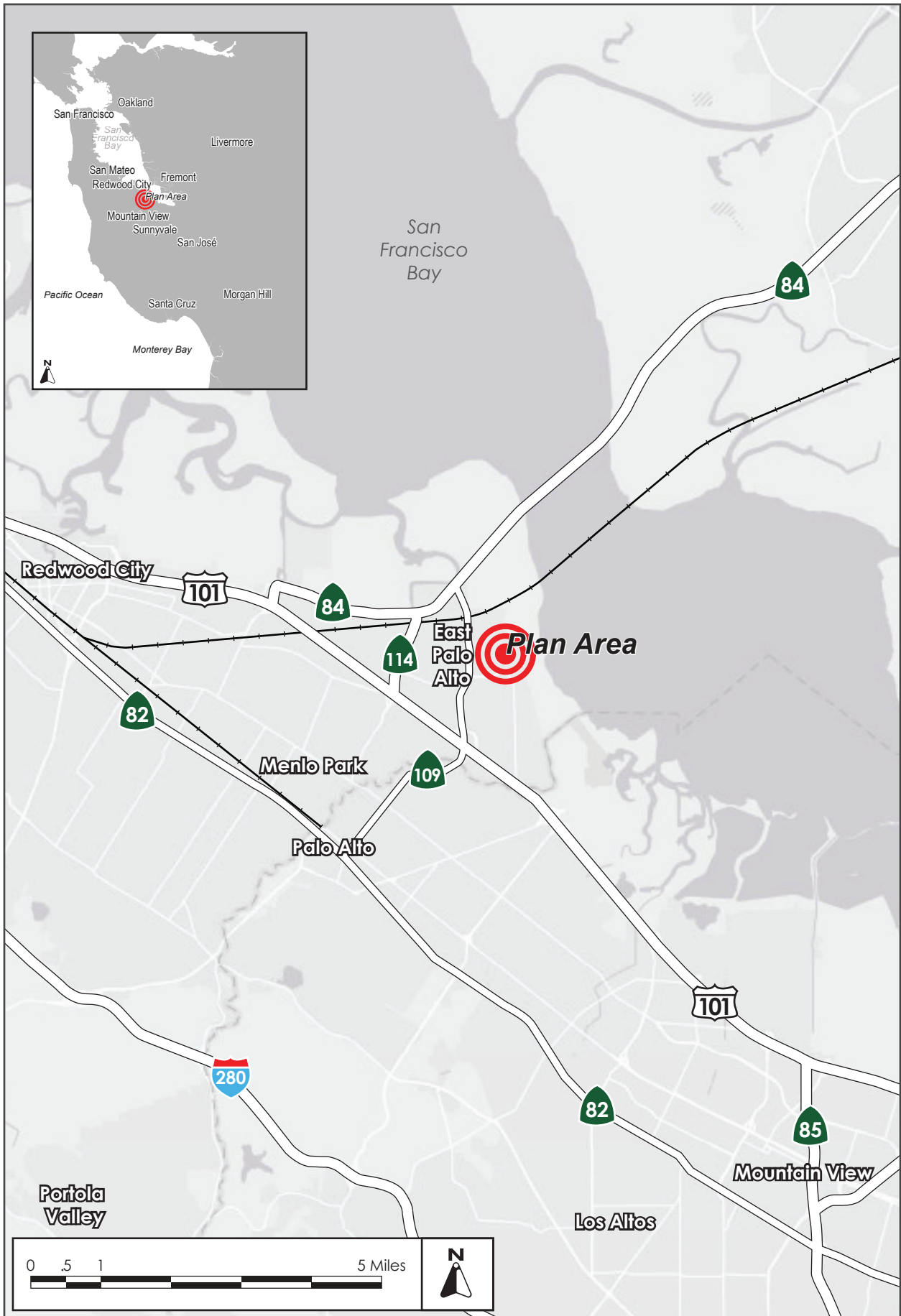
Members of the public may view the meeting by:

- 1) viewing the City's live broadcast accessed through <http://eastpal Alto.iqm2.com/Citizens/Default.aspx>
- 2) tuning to Channel 29 (local television);
- 3) going to <https://midpenmedia.org/local-tv/watch-now/>;
- 4) going to the City Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/CityOfEastPaloAlto>;
- 5) joining the meeting via Zoom from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device at <https://zoom.us/j/264253019> Meeting ID: 264 253 019; or
- 6) dialing +1 669 900 6833 (San Jose) and entering Meeting ID: 264 253 019.

For further information regarding this meeting, contact the City of East Palo Alto Planning Division, (650) 853-3189. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires reasonable accommodation and access for the physically challenged. Those requesting such accommodation should contact the Planning Commission Secretary at (650) 853-3189 four days before the hearing date.

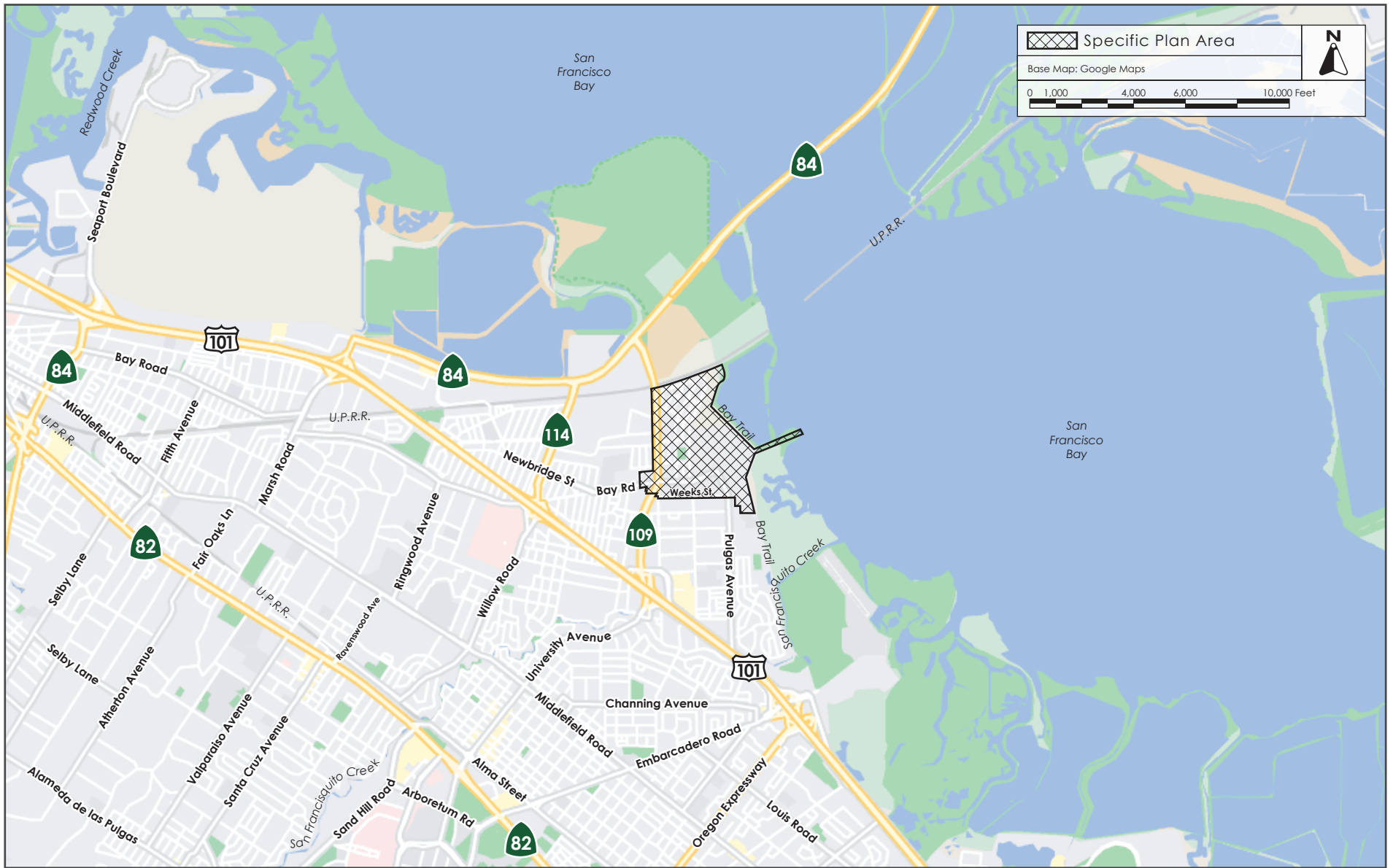
Date: April 15, 2022

Elena Lee
Planning Manager
City of East Palo Alto



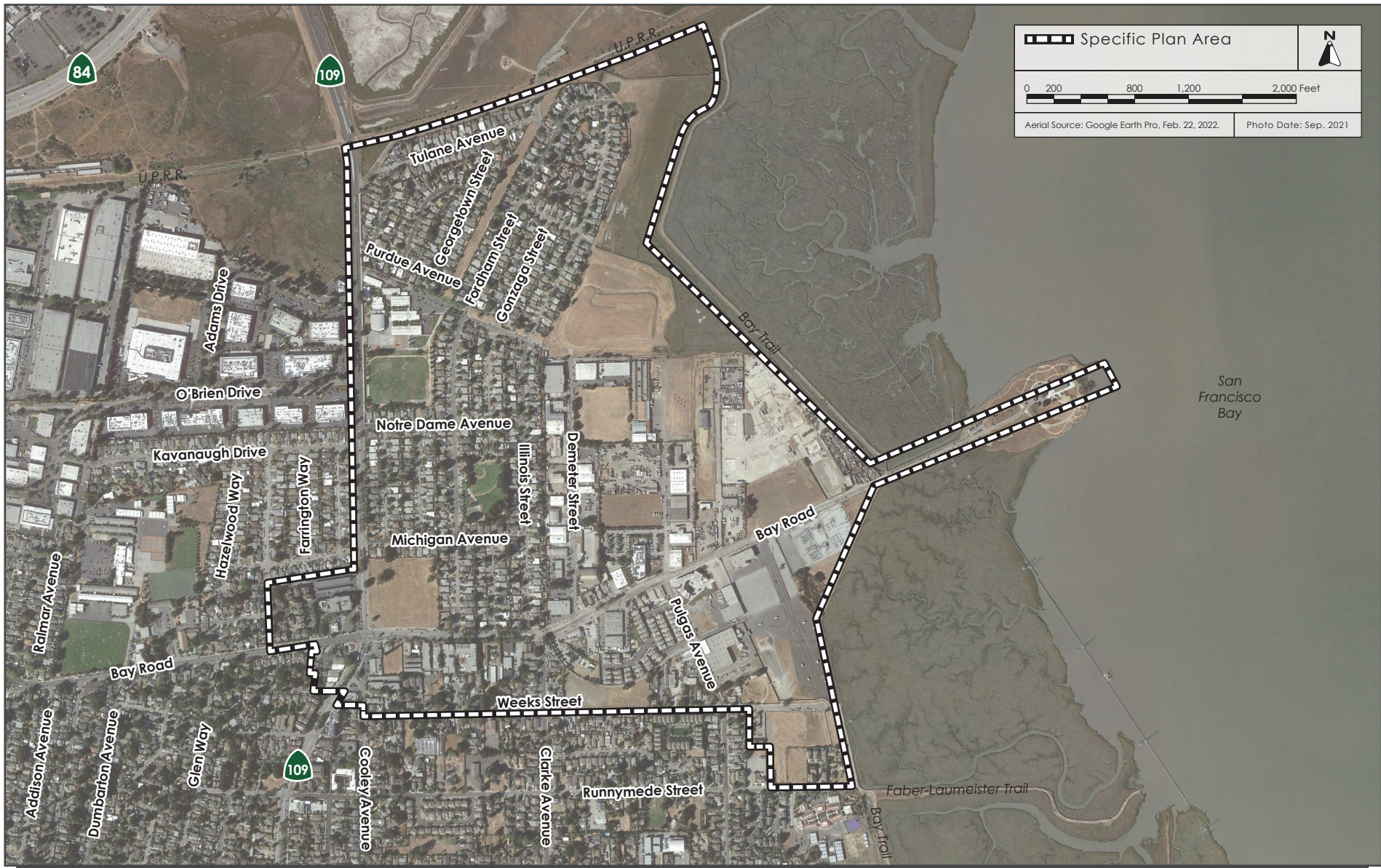
REGIONAL MAP

FIGURE 1



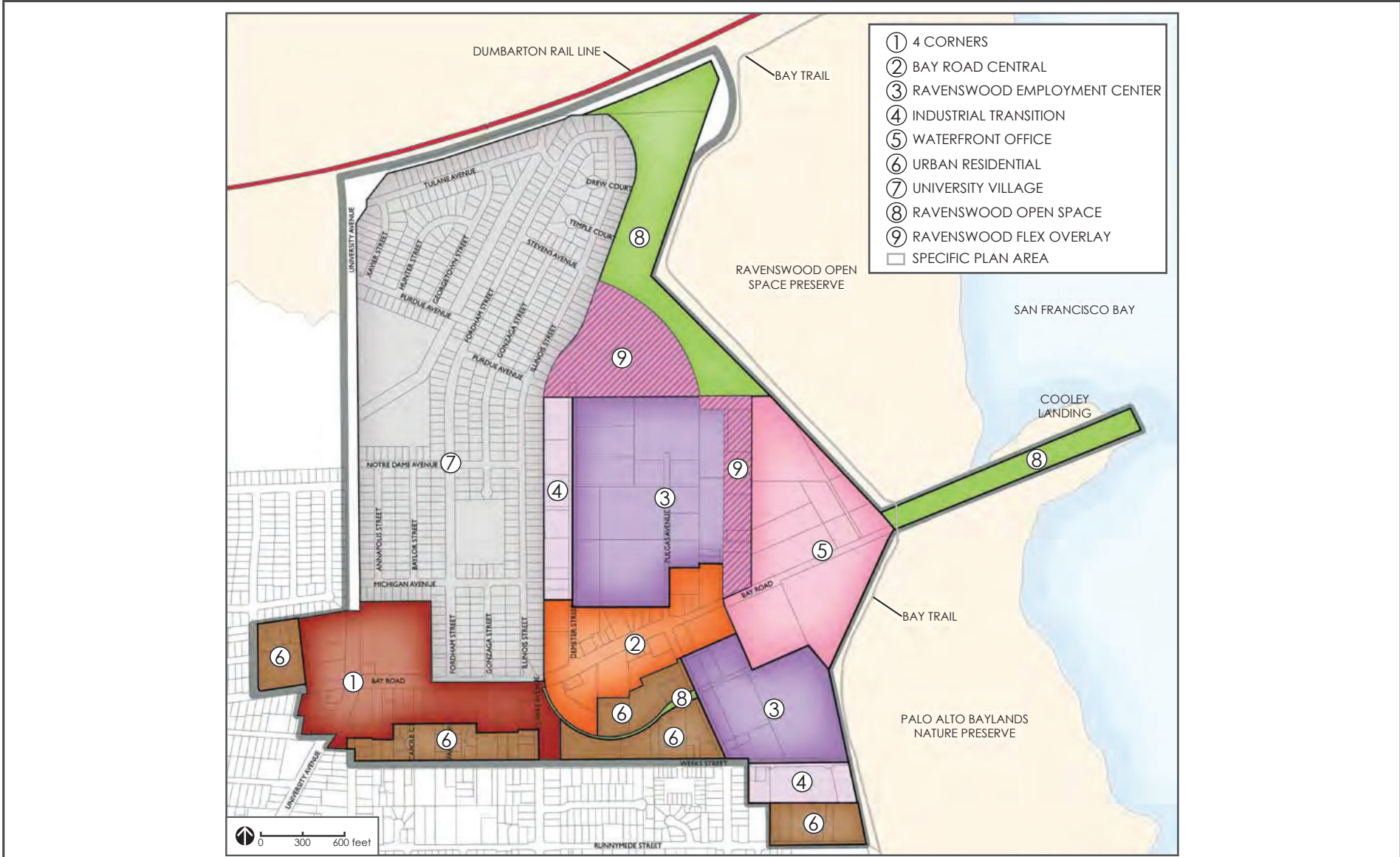
VICINITY MAP

FIGURE 2



AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF RAVENSWOOD/4 CORNERS TOD SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

FIGURE 3



Source: City of East Palo Alto, Ravenswood/4 Corners TOD Specific Plan.

EXISTING RAVENSWOOD/4 CORNERS TOD SPECIFIC PLAN ZONING

FIGURE 4