



NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

TO: State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, and Other Interested Parties
DATE: June 8, 2020
SUBJECT: **Notice of Preparation of Environmental Impact Report (EIR)**
Notice of EIR Scoping Meeting on Monday, June 22, 2020
LEAD AGENCY: City of East Palo Alto
PROJECT TITLE: University Circle Phase II Office Project
PROJECT AREA: City of East Palo Alto

Notice is hereby given that the City of East Palo Alto (City) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the University Circle Phase II Office project. The project location, project description, and the potential environmental effects that will be evaluated in the EIR are described below. Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines (14 C.C.R. § 15060(d)), the City has determined that an EIR is clearly required for the project and as such an Initial Study will not be prepared and the City will begin work directly on the EIR.

The City is requesting comments and guidance on the scope and content of the EIR 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 EIR 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 **Wednesday, July 8, 2020 at 4 PM**. Please mail or email your written comments to Art Henriques at the address shown below. Public agencies providing comments are asked to include a contact person for the agency.

LEAD AGENCY CONTACT:

Art Henriques
Contract Project Manager
City of East Palo Alto, Planning Division
1960 Tate Street
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
ahenriques@cityofepa.org

A digital copy of this NOP and additional detail about the project can be viewed at: <http://www.ci.east-palo-alto.ca.us/index.aspx?NID=663>

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

June 22, 2020 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 4 below.

INTRODUCTION:

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 consider alternatives to a proposed project.

The project site is located along the western city limits of East Palo Alto. Development within the City was previously evaluated in the *City of East Palo Alto General Plan Update EIR* certified by the East Palo Alto City Council in 2016. The University Circle Phase II Office Project EIR, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, will tier off the previous analysis completed for the site under the *City of East Palo Alto General Plan Update EIR*, where appropriate.

The EIR to be prepared for the proposed project will focus on evaluation of the project specific environmental impacts that were not addressed in the certified *City of East Palo Alto General Plan Update EIR*. The project location, project description, and potential environmental effects that will be evaluated in the EIR are described generally below.

PROJECT LOCATION:

The approximately 11.84-acre project site is comprised of one parcel (Assessor's Parcel Number [APN] 063-680-020) located at 1900, 1950, 2000 and 2050 University Circle, in the western portion of the City of East Palo Alto. The site is bounded by U.S. 101, Manhattan Avenue, Woodland Avenue and San Francisquito Creek, and University Avenue to the north, west, south, and east, respectively. The site is zoned and designated Office in the East Palo Alto Zoning Code and General Plan and is currently developed with three office buildings, one hotel, a parking structure, and surface and below-grade parking. A one-level, below-grade parking garage underlies much of the site, except for the southeast corner where the proposed office building and below-grade parking garage would be constructed. University Circle, a private road extending into the site from Woodland Avenue, serves as primary site access. Secondary at-grade access is located at the West Bayshore Road and Manhattan Avenue intersection, and secondary below-grade parking access is provided on Manhattan Avenue.

Surrounding uses include commercial, retail, and office to the north (across U.S. 101), single-family residential to the south (across Woodland Avenue and San Francisquito Creek), multi-family residential and commercial to the west (across Manhattan Avenue) and single- and multi-family residential to the east (across University Avenue). Regional, vicinity, and aerial maps of the project site are shown on Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3, respectively.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project proposes to redevelop the existing parking lot located in the southeast corner of the project site with a six-story, approximately 180,000-square-foot office building above three levels of below-grade parking. A conceptual site plan and building elevation are provided on Figures 4 and 5, respectively. The project would be built to the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) and designed to achieve the equivalent of LEED Platinum certification to minimize wasteful energy consumption. The project would connect to existing utilities lines (e.g., water, sanitary sewer, and storm drain lines) on Woodland Avenue and Manhattan Avenue and would incorporate stormwater detention measures to store and control project peak flow rates to pre-project levels.

Project construction would take approximately 36 months to complete. Construction activities would include removal of the existing parking lot improvements and landscaping, excavation and construction of the below-grade parking garage, and construction of the office building. Excavation to a maximum depth of approximately 36 feet and removal of approximately 132,473 cubic yards of soil would be necessary to construct the project.

Vehicular site access would continue to be provided via University Circle and Manhattan Avenue upon project completion.

Community Benefits

Consistent with Westside Area Plan Policy 5.14 in the General Plan, which requires new development in the Westside area to provide community benefits, the project includes the following community benefits: easement dedication for a future City bike path along the eastern property line from U.S. 101 to Woodland Avenue, parking space dedication for use by surrounding residences, improvements to the Manhattan Avenue bus stop, office space dedication for City use, and public art and memorial creation.

EIR ANALYSIS:

The EIR will assess the project’s potential direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts on all environmental factors outlined in the CEQA Environmental Checklist (CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G) and listed below. It is anticipated that the primary focus of analysis will be on air quality, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, transportation, and the capacity of existing utility and service systems to serve the project. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

Alternatives: The EIR will examine alternatives to the proposed project including a “No Project” alternative and one or more alternatives depending on the impacts identified. Other alternatives that may be discussed could include an alternative location, reduced scale, and an alternative site design. 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: This section 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 EIR 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) EIR authors.

As noted previously, a digital copy of this NOP and additional detail about the project can be viewed at:

<http://www.ci.east-palo-alto.ca.us/index.aspx?NID=663>

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

Due to local and statewide shelter in place directives resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of East Palo Alto will hold an online EIR public scoping session/workshop consistent with Public Resources Code §§ 21080.4(b) and 21083.9 in lieu of a public gathering. This scoping session will be an agenda item of a scheduled session of the Planning Commission. 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 EIR. The Planning Commission meeting will be held online on **Monday, June 22, 2020 at 7:00 pm** and accessed via the Zoom meeting link on the following page. In addition, an agenda packet will be available no later than the Friday before the meeting date at the following link:

http://eastpaloalto.iqm2.com/Citizens/Detail_Meeting.aspx?ID=1049.

Members of the public may provide comments by email to ahenriques@cityofepa.org. Emailed comments should include the specific Planning Commission Study Session agenda item on which you are commenting. Comments will be included if received prior to sending out the Planning Commissioners’ packets. If you wish to have your comments read to the Commission, please so indicate. The length of the emailed comments should be within the three minutes customarily allowed for verbal comments, which is approximately 200-250 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 5:00 p.m. on June 22, 2020. 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 5:00 p.m. deadline that are not read into the record will be provided to the Planning Commission after the meeting.

Members of the public may view the meeting by:

- 1) tuning to Channel 29;
- 2) going to <https://midpenmedia.org/>;

3) going to the City Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/CityOfEastPaloAlto>;

4) joining the meeting via Zoom from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device at <https://zoom.us/s/264253019> Meeting ID: 264 253 019; or

5) dialing one of the following phone numbers below (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location) and entering Meeting ID: 264 253 019.

+1 669 900 6833 (San Jose)

+1 346 248 7799 (Houston)

+1 301 715 8592

+1 312 626 6799 (Chicago)

+1 929 205 6099 (New York)

+1 253 215 8782

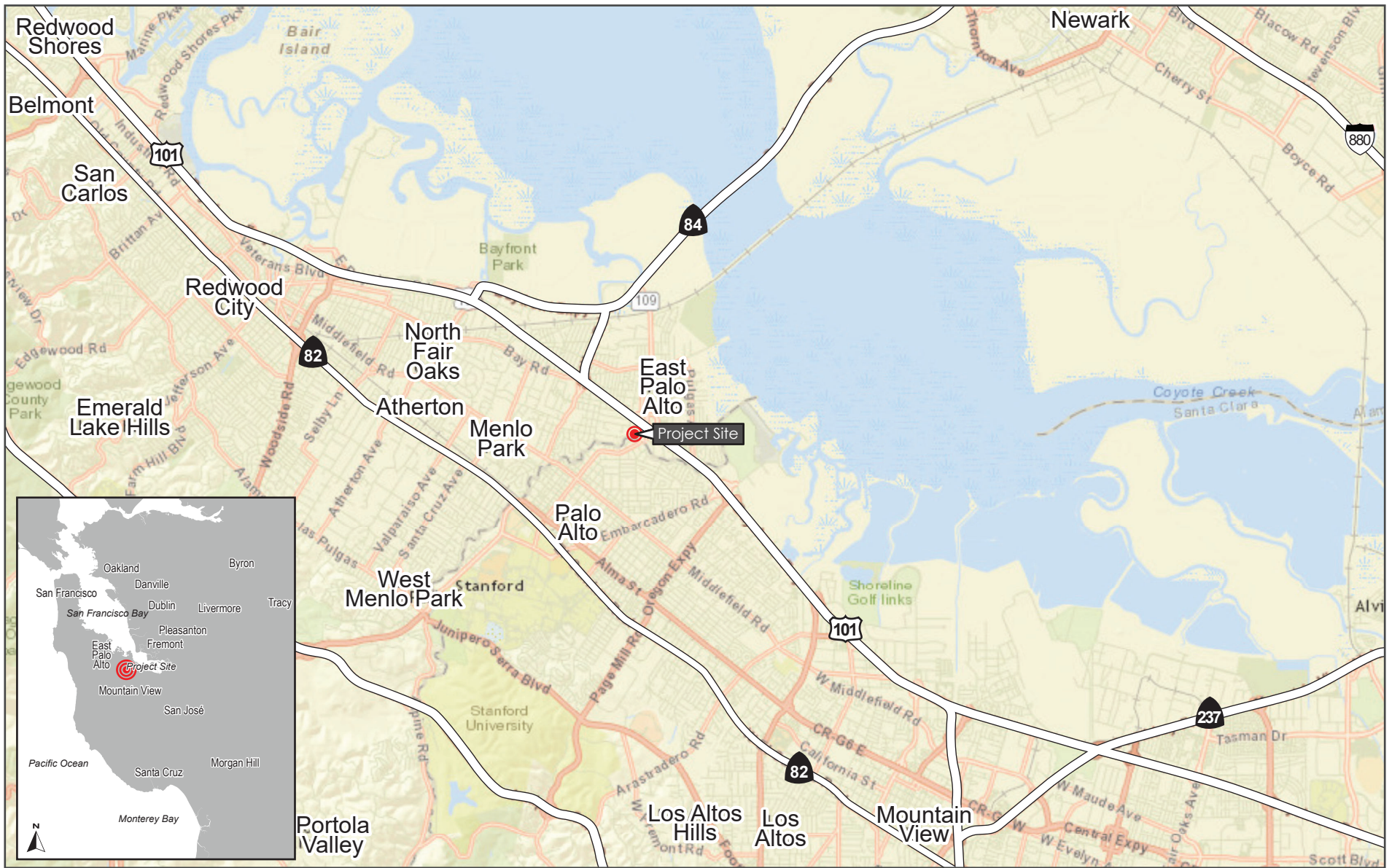
ALL INTERESTED PARTIES ARE INVITED TO SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS ON THE SCOPE OF THE EIR TO ASSIST IN IDENTIFYING ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED.

For additional information, please contact Art Henriques, Contract Project Manager, at ahenriques@cityofepa.org or (650) 853-3121.

Date: May 29, 2020

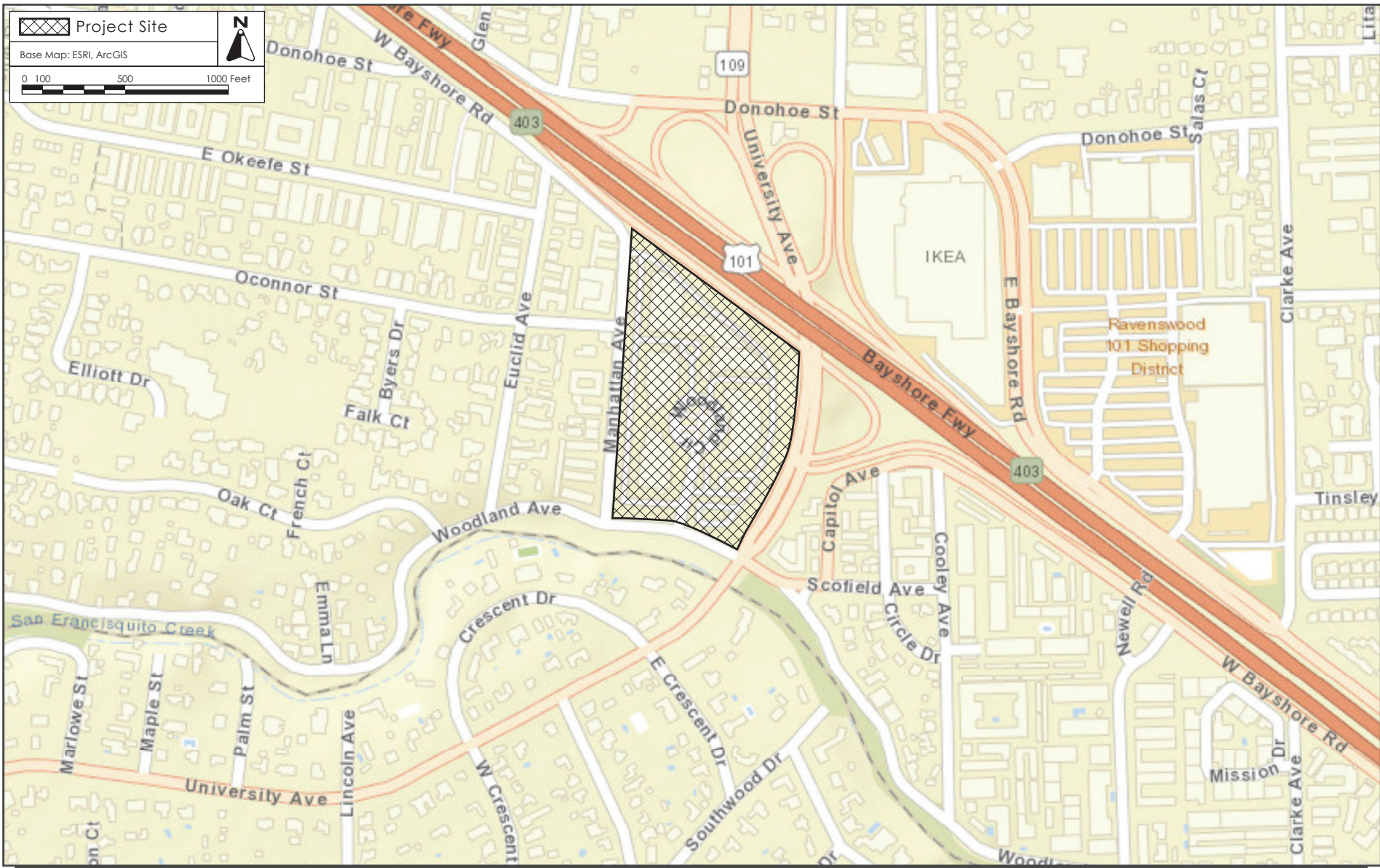
Signature: 

Amy Chen
City of East Palo Alto
Director of Community and Economic
Development



REGIONAL MAP

FIGURE 1



VICINITY MAP

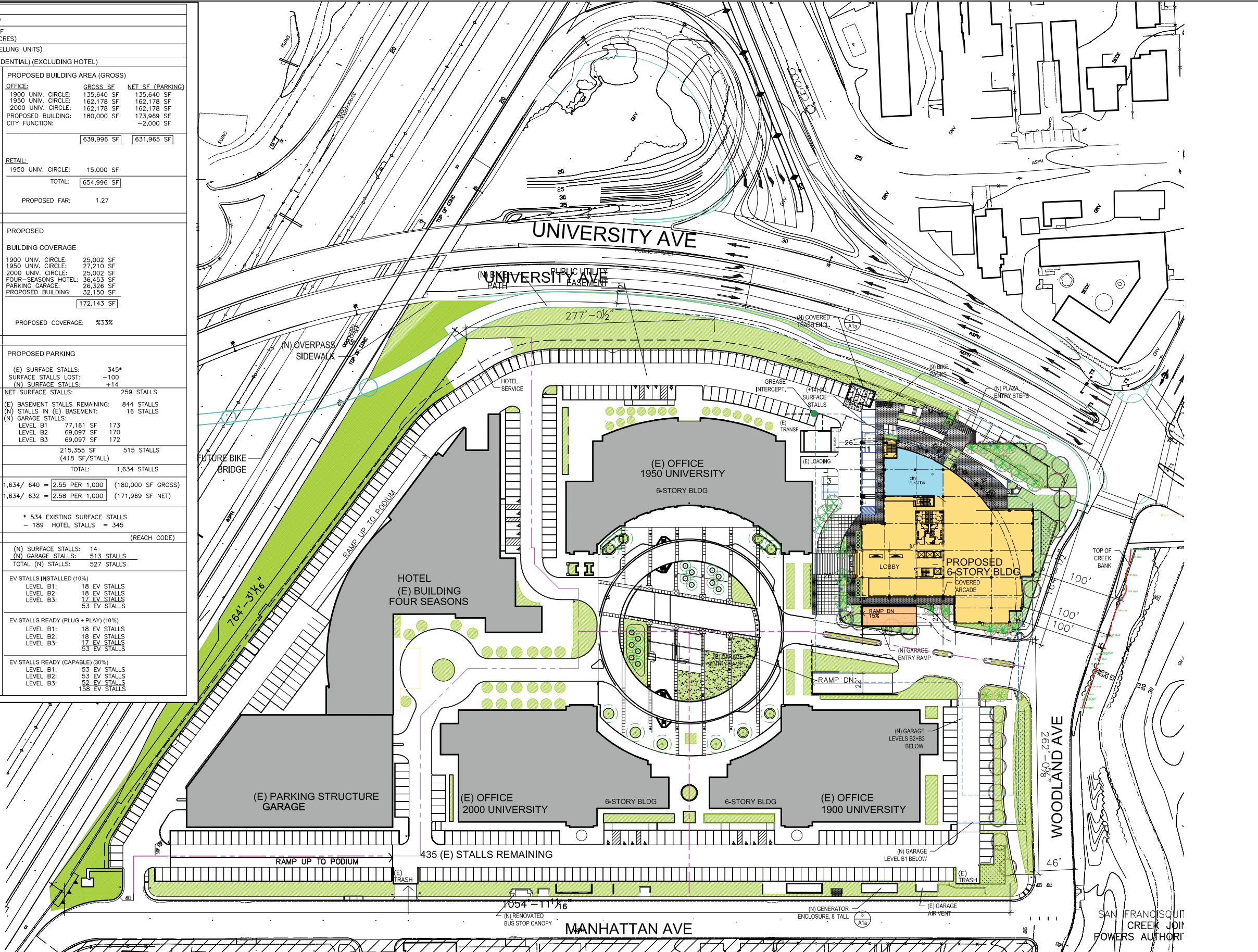
FIGURE 2



AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH AND SURROUNDING LAND USES

FIGURE 3

SHEET NO. 3	
APN: 063680020	
1.	SITE AREA: 516,147 SF (11.849 ACRES)
2.	NO. OF DWELLING UNITS: 0 (NO DWELLING UNITS)
3.	BUILDING AREA (GROSS) (NON-RESIDENTIAL) (EXCLUDING HOTEL)
EXISTING BUILDING AREA (GROSS)	
OFFICE:	PROPOSED BUILDING AREA (GROSS)
1900 UNIV. CIRCLE: 135,640 SF	OFFICE: GROSS SF NET SF (PARKING)
1950 UNIV. CIRCLE: 162,178 SF	1900 UNIV. CIRCLE: 135,640 SF 135,640 SF
2000 UNIV. CIRCLE: 162,178 SF	1950 UNIV. CIRCLE: 162,178 SF 162,178 SF
459,996 SF	2000 UNIV. CIRCLE: 162,178 SF 162,178 SF
	PROPOSED BUILDING: 180,000 SF 173,969 SF
	CITY FUNCTION: -2,000 SF
	639,996 SF 631,965 SF
RETAIL:	
1950 UNIV. CIRCLE: 15,000 SF	RETAIL: 1950 UNIV. CIRCLE: 15,000 SF
TOTAL: 468,223 SF	TOTAL: 654,996 SF
EXISTING FAR: .9	PROPOSED FAR: 1.27
6. COVERAGE	
EXISTING	
BUILDING COVERAGE	
1900 UNIV. CIRCLE: 25,002 SF	PROPOSED
1950 UNIV. CIRCLE: 27,210 SF	1900 UNIV. CIRCLE: 25,002 SF
2000 UNIV. CIRCLE: 25,002 SF	1950 UNIV. CIRCLE: 27,210 SF
FOUR-SEASONS HOTEL: 36,453 SF	2000 UNIV. CIRCLE: 25,002 SF
PARKING GARAGE: 26,326 SF	FOUR-SEASONS HOTEL: 36,453 SF
139,993 SF	PARKING GARAGE: 26,326 SF
	PROPOSED BUILDING: 32,150 SF
EXISTING COVERAGE: %27.1	PROPOSED COVERAGE: %33%
5. PARKING	
EXISTING OFFICE PARKING	
(E) SURFACE STALLS: 345*	PROPOSED PARKING
(E) BASEMENT STALLS: 849	(E) SURFACE STALLS: 345*
TOTAL: 1,194 STALLS	SURFACE STALLS LOST: -100
	(N) SURFACE STALLS: +14
	NET SURFACE STALLS: 259 STALLS
	(E) BASEMENT STALLS REMAINING: 844 STALLS
	(N) STALLS IN (E) BASEMENT: 16 STALLS
	(N) GARAGE STALLS:
	LEVEL B1 77,161 SF 173
	LEVEL B2 69,097 SF 170
	LEVEL B3 69,097 SF 172
	215,355 SF 515 STALLS
	(418 SF/STALL)
	TOTAL: 1,634 STALLS
1,194 / 459,996 = 2.6 PER 1,000	1,634 / 640 = 2.55 PER 1,000 (180,000 SF GROSS)
	1,634 / 632 = 2.58 PER 1,000 (171,969 SF NET)
* 534 EXISTING SURFACE STALLS	* 534 EXISTING SURFACE STALLS
- 189 HOTEL STALLS = 345	- 189 HOTEL STALLS = 345
5. ELECTRIC VEHICLE PARKING (REACH CODE)	
(N) SURFACE STALLS: 14	(N) GARAGE STALLS: 513 STALLS
(N) GARAGE STALLS: 513 STALLS	TOTAL (N) STALLS: 527 STALLS
EV STALLS INSTALLED (10%)	
LEVEL B1: 18 EV STALLS	
LEVEL B2: 18 EV STALLS	
LEVEL B3: 17 EV STALLS	
53 EV STALLS	
EV STALLS READY (PLUG + PLAY) (10%)	
LEVEL B1: 18 EV STALLS	
LEVEL B2: 18 EV STALLS	
LEVEL B3: 17 EV STALLS	
53 EV STALLS	
EV STALLS READY (CAPABLE) (30%)	
LEVEL B1: 53 EV STALLS	
LEVEL B2: 53 EV STALLS	
LEVEL B3: 52 EV STALLS	
158 EV STALLS	



SAN FRANCISCO
CREEK JOIN
POWERS AUTHORITY

CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN

FIGURE 4



CONCEPTUAL BUILDING ELEVATION

FIGURE 5