

Chapter 2 Project Description

The Sobrato Organization (Project Sponsor) is proposing to redevelop the properties at 151 Commonwealth Drive and 164 Jefferson Drive (collectively referred to as the Project site) in the City of Menlo Park (City). The 12.1-acre Commonwealth Site was formerly occupied by Diageo North America and has been unoccupied since July 2011. The 1.17-acre Jefferson Site is directly adjacent to the Commonwealth Site to the north. This site consists of an operational warehouse building used for office and light industrial uses and associated surface parking. The Commonwealth Corporate Center Project (Project) would demolish the existing structures and construct two four-story buildings with approximately 259,920 square feet (sf) of space. Flexible floor plans would be developed for office, biotech, and/or research and development (R&D) space with a capacity of approximately 1,300 employees.

2.1 Project Location and Setting

The Project site, which includes the Commonwealth Site and the Jefferson Site, is located in the City of Menlo Park, north of US 101. The two parcels currently comprising the Project site total approximately 13.27 acres (578,472 sf). Both parcels are zoned M-2 (General Industrial) and are located within the City's Limited Industry land use designation in the City's General Plan.

Figure 2-1 depicts the Project location. The Project site is generally 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. Within the Project site, the Commonwealth Site currently contains three buildings and support space that totals approximately 217,396 sf; the Jefferson Site contains one building that totals 20,462 sf. In addition, the Project site includes parking, pavement, and minor landscape features. The area is highly developed, mixed with industrial, commercial, and residential uses. Table 2-1 summarizes the existing building uses at the Project site, and Figure 2-2 depicts the existing site plan.

Table 2-1. Existing Uses at the Project Site

Building Uses	Total Floor Area (sf)	Number of Floors
Commonwealth Site		
Manufacturing	163,058	1
Warehouse/Garage	38,527	1
Office	15,811	1
Total	217,396	--
Jefferson Site		
Warehouse	17,100	1
Office	3,362	1
Total	20,462	--
Total Project Site	237,858	--

Source: Arc Tech 2012.

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

Commonwealth Site

The 12.1-acre (527,289-sf) Commonwealth Site is bound by office parks to the north and west, the Jefferson Site to the north, and US 101 to the south. In addition, the site is directly adjacent to the southeast by the Dumbarton Rail Corridor and with Joseph P. Kelly Park further to the east. The Commonwealth Site is relatively flat and lies at an elevation of approximately 6.7 to 11.9 feet above mean sea level (msl). The site consists of Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 055-243-240 and is accessible from 151 Commonwealth Drive.

The Commonwealth Site was formerly occupied by Diageo North America and was used as a spirits distilling, bottling, and distribution plant. The main manufacturing building was constructed in 1956, with an addition constructed in 1970.² When in full operation, the Commonwealth Site consisted of three single-story buildings, a tank farm, processing equipment areas, a 500,000-gallon fire suppression water tank, storage areas, and associated parking and landscaped areas. Facility operations were discontinued on July 9, 2011, and closure activities were completed October 31, 2011. The Commonwealth Site has remained unoccupied since. Onsite buildings include 163,058 sf of manufacturing space (including a boiler room), 38,527 sf of warehouse and garage areas, and 15,811 sf of office space, for a total of approximately 217,400 sf of formerly usable space. Additional structures are located in the northern portion of the Commonwealth Site, including water storage structures and outdoor storage sheds. The Commonwealth Site is currently zoned M-2 (General Industrial) and is located within the City's Limited Industry land use designation in the General Plan.

Jefferson Site

The 1.17-acre (51,183-sf) Jefferson Site is bound by Jefferson Drive to the north, office parks to the east, south, and west, and the Commonwealth Site to the south. The Jefferson Site is relatively flat and lies at an elevation of approximately 6.6 to 7.4 feet above msl. The site consists of APN 055-243-050 and is accessible from two driveways in the northern portion of the site along Jefferson Drive.

One building, which is currently operational, is located on the Jefferson Site. This one-story, 20,462-sf building is used as warehouses and offices for storage and light industrial uses. Approximately 30 people are currently employed at the Jefferson Site. The site features 47 existing parking spaces and minor landscaping. Like the Commonwealth Site, the Jefferson Site is zoned M-2 and is located within the City's Limited Industry land use designation in the City's General Plan.

2.2 Project Objectives

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) addresses the physical impacts of the Project as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Project Sponsor has identified the following project objectives that are relevant to the physical impacts considered in this document.

- Redevelop an underutilized property in Menlo Park that is visible from US 101 into an economically viable, flexible, and adaptable R&D/office campus.
- Develop two equivalent-sized buildings within the allowable floor area ratio (FAR) for the M-2 zone.

² PES Environmental, Inc. 2011. Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Former Diageo North American Facility, 151 Commonwealth Drive, Menlo Park, California. November 29.

- Maximize the amount of onsite landscaping.
- Achieve economies of scale and attract significant corporate tenants.
- Maintain convenient access to and from US 101.
- Create jobs and tax revenues for the City of Menlo Park.

2.3 Project Characteristics

The Project would include the demolition of the existing buildings and paved features and the construction of new structures. In order to develop the Project site to the desired height, the Project would require rezoning to the M-2(X) (Conditional Development Overlay) zoning district with a corresponding Conditional Development Permit (CDP). Table 2-2 summarizes the allowed development under current M-2 zoning and the proposed development.

Table 2-2. Allowed and Proposed Development at the Project Site^a

	Allowed Development (M-2 Zoning)	Proposed Development (M-2[X]Zoning)
Floor Area Ratio	0.45	0.45
Total Square Feet	260,313	259,920
Site Coverage	50%	11.9% ^a
Max. Building Heights	35'	61'4" ^b

Sources: City of Menlo Park 2012; Arc Tech 2012.

Notes:

- Building footprints would occupy 11.9 percent of the site (69,070 sf). In addition, landscaping would constitute 25.6 percent of the site, and paving would make up 62.5 percent of the site.
- According to Section 16.04.330 of the Municipal Code, height of a structure is defined as “the vertical distance from the average level of the highest and lowest points of the natural grade... to the topmost point of the structure, excluding elevator equipment rooms, ventilating and air conditioning equipment and chimneys.” As such, the screened mechanical areas are excluded from the height calculations. Including roof screen, elevator shaft, and stairwell, the buildings would be approximately 72'4.”

Entitlements

The Project site is currently zoned M-2 and designated Limited Industry in the City’s General Plan. Under the current land use designation, the Project site could be built out to approximately 260,313 sf, with a FAR of 0.45, as identified in the City’s zoning ordinance.³ The Project would comply with these requirements; however, the two proposed buildings would exceed the 35-foot maximum height limit in the M-2 zoning district. In order to comply with the M-2 zoning, the increase in height from 35 feet (allowed) to 61.3 feet (proposed) would require rezoning the Project site to M-2(X). In addition, a CDP would be required to modify existing M-2 development regulations in order to establish a new height limit. The Project site would require the approval of a tentative map to reconfigure the Project site into multiple parcels.

³ City of Menlo Park. 2010. Menlo Park Municipal Code, Section 16.46.030(7). December 14.

The Project would also require a tree removal permit for each heritage tree proposed for removal per Municipal Code Section 13.24.040 and a Below Market Rate Housing Agreement for the payment of in-lieu fees associated with the City's Below Market Rate Housing Program.

Proposed Site Plan

The Project would require the demolition of the existing buildings at the Project site and would entail the construction of two office/biotech/R&D buildings, a surface parking lot, onsite linkages, and landscaping.⁴ Table 2-3 shows a summary of the proposed buildings.

Table 2-3. Proposed Development at the Project Site

Building	Building Use	Total Floor Area (sf)	Number of Floors
Building 1	Office/R&D/Biotech	129,960	4
Building 2	Office/R&D/Biotech	129,960	4
Total	--	259,920	--

Source: Arc Tec, 2012.

The Project Sponsor's conceptual site plan, as shown in Figure 2-3, proposes two separate buildings located in the southwest corner of the Project site towards the main entrance at Commonwealth Drive. Building 1 would be arranged in an east-west orientation while Building 2 would be arranged in a north-south orientation to the east of Building 1. Each building would have a footprint of approximately 34,535 sf. Together, the two buildings would have a total floor area of 259,920 sf. Building elevations are shown in Figures 2-4 and 2-5.

The proposed structures would be surrounded by surface parking, landscaping, pedestrian paths, and water features. A courtyard with café tables and chairs would be situated in between the two buildings and would provide a social space for the Project. Two covered trash and generator enclosures would be located within the parking lots to the northwest of Building 1 and to the southeast of Building 2.

Bicycle lockers would also be provided within the parking lot to the north of the two buildings. One depressed truck loading dock per building would be located in the northwest and southwest corners of Buildings 1 and 2, respectively. The northern portion of the Project site (the Jefferson Site) would include an entrance and driveway from Jefferson Drive, a lawn area for active recreation (including a volleyball court), a basketball court, picnic tables, a stormwater treatment area, and landscaping, including a fence approximately 7 feet in height.

The Project would provide a flexible floor plan and building design that could ultimately accommodate office, biotech, and/or R&D uses. In addition, approximately 5,000 sf per building would be dedicated to cafeterias that would be closed to the public.

Site Access, Circulation, and Parking

Vehicular Access and Circulation. The Project site would be accessible from two driveways: the main access point at Commonwealth Drive in the southwest corner of the Project site and the secondary access point at Jefferson Drive in the northern portion of the Project site. Both entrances would include

⁴ Unless otherwise stated, all information from this section is from: The Sobrato Organization and Arc Tec. 2012. "A Planning Department Submittal for: Commonwealth Corporate Center." July 17.

monument signs. A two-lane boulevard would be located along the western boundary of the Project site and would connect the Commonwealth Drive entrance, the Jefferson Drive entrance, and the surface parking lot. This boulevard would include decorative/accent paving, a pedestrian walkway, signage, and a landscaped center median. Entrances to the surface parking would be provided in three locations along the boulevard.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation. Pedestrian walkways would be included between the internal boulevard and the proposed buildings. In addition, as shown in Figure 2-3, several walkways with enhanced paving at crosswalks would traverse the Project site in east-west and north-south directions leading from the proposed buildings to the parking lot. The Project site will include 6 bike racks (Class II spaces) placed at convenient and well-lit locations near the main entrance of each building. Each of these racks can accommodate 2 bikes, for a total of 24 bicycle spaces (12 at each building). In addition, bicycle lockers (Class I spaces), with a capacity of 20 bikes, would be provided adjacent to Building 2. Additional onsite bicycle amenities would include showers and changing rooms, as described in the Project's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan included in Appendix 3.3-D.

Emergency Access. Emergency access to the Project site would be provided from both access points at Commonwealth Drive and Jefferson Drive. Emergency vehicles would enter the site at Commonwealth Drive and continue along the northern portion of the Project site, adjacent to the proposed buildings. Emergency vehicles would travel around the buildings and exit at Jefferson Drive. Fire hydrants and fire department connections would be located along the emergency access route in the vicinity of the proposed buildings.

Parking. Parking would be provided in surface lots to the north, east, and south of the proposed buildings. The M-2 zoning requires one parking stall per 300 sf of building space. As such, the Project would include 849 standard parking stalls, 16 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) stalls, and two van-accessible stalls. As part of the Project's TDM Plan, approximately 5.5 percent of the total parking spaces (approximately 48 stalls) would be dedicated to carpool parking. In total, approximately 867 parking spaces would be provided at the Project site.

Alternative Transportation. The Project's TDM Plan would provide services, incentives, facilities, and actions that would reduce single-occupant vehicle trips. The plan would encourage the use of public transportation and other forms of alternative transportation. The Project site is currently served by the Marsh Road Shuttle, which is a free shuttle service with timed connections to many of the AM/PM peak period trains at the Menlo Park Caltrain station in both the northbound and southbound directions. The existing shuttle service includes a stop on Commonwealth Drive, less than 100 feet from the Project site. In order to encourage employees to use Caltrain and the Marsh Road Shuttle, subsidized transit passes, such as a Caltrain Go Pass, would be provided to employees at the Project site. The Caltrain Go Pass is an employer-sponsored annual pass that offers unlimited rides on Caltrain through all zones, 7 days per week. Carpooling and vanpool programs would also be encouraged through free ride matching services, carpool incentive programs, vanpool formation incentives, vanpool seat subsidies, and vanpool participant rebates. Emergency ride home programs would also be implemented. Refer to Appendix 3.3-D for a full discussion of the Project's TDM Plan.

Landscaping

As shown in Figure 2-6, landscaping would be provided throughout the Project site. The areas adjacent to the proposed buildings would include bamboo clusters, a variety of trees, wall water features, pedestrian paving, a sunken lawn with seat walls, lighting, tree grates, curved and raised seatwalls, lounging steps, and café tables and chairs. A variety of shade trees would be planted in the surface parking lot within 24-

inch boxes. The portion of the Project site adjacent to Jefferson Drive would include a lawn, active recreation spaces with a basketball court and a lawn volleyball court, planting areas, picnic tables, fencing, and other vegetation.

Currently, there are 45 trees at the Project site. The Project would remove 44 of these trees, 23 of which are considered Heritage Trees per Section 13.24 of the City's Municipal Code.⁵ One Heritage Tree, a native oak tree, would remain upon implementation of the Project. However, approximately 474 trees would be planted to offset the Heritage Tree removal. A variety of tree species would be planted.

The existing Project site is covered with approximately 540,577 sf of impervious surfaces (93.4 percent). Implementation of the Project would reduce impervious surfaces to 74.4 percent (approximately 430,278 sf). Up to eight stormwater treatment areas would be located throughout the Project site in order to limit stormwater runoff. These biotreatment areas would be open, level, vegetated areas that would allow runoff to be distributed evenly across the area. They would be designed to treat runoff by filtering raw runoff through the soil media in the treatment area. These biotreatment areas would trap particulate pollutants (suspended solids and trace metals) and promote infiltration.

Building Features, Signage, and Lighting

The final design of the Project, including lighting, would be determined as part of the City's land use entitlement process by the Planning Commission and City Council, which would include input from the public. With regard to lighting, the performance standards set by Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) would be followed, and light pollution would be considered and minimized. The proposed building façade would incorporate silver composite aluminum panels, low-e glazing, and high-performance glass set in aluminum frames. This façade would provide energy saving benefits for the buildings. Other building features would include fin columns, cornices, metal roof screens, and guardrails. Signage would be provided at the two entrances and on the facades of each building. The maximum sign area for the Project site would be 300 sf.

California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 24, Part 11 is the California Green Building Standard Code (CALGreen), which was adopted in 2010 and became effective January 1, 2011. CALGreen is the first statewide mandatory green building code and significantly raised the minimum environmental standards for construction of new buildings in California. CALGreen requires nonresidential building construction to consider deconstruction and reuse of existing structures, energy efficiency, water efficiency and conservation for both indoor and outdoor water use, material conservation and resource efficiency, efficient framing techniques, material sources, and construction waste reduction.⁶ The 2013 Building Energy Efficiency Standards, effective July 2014 as CCR Title 24, Part 6, also focus on several key areas to improve the energy efficiency of newly constructed buildings and include requirements that will enable both demand reductions during critical peak periods and future solar electric and thermal system installations. The most significant efficiency improvements to nonresidential standards are proposed for lighting controls, windows, unitary HVAC equipment, and building commissioning.⁷ The Project would be designed to meet CCR Title 24 and any amendments required by the City. In addition, the Project would be designed to accommodate potential future installation of measures that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including: installing conduit in the parking lots to accommodate potential electric vehicle

⁵ McClenahan Consulting, LLC. 2012. "Tree Survey." 151 Commonwealth and 164 Jefferson. March 27.

⁶ California Department of Housing and Community Development. 2012. "CALGreen." Available: <<http://hcd.ca.gov/CALGreen.html>>. Accessed: December 13, 2013.

⁷ California Energy Commission. 2013. "2013 Building and Energy Efficiency Standards." Available: <<http://www.energy.ca.gov/title24/>>. Accessed: December 13, 2013.

charging stations, “quick chargers”, and potential photovoltaic arrays; designing the electrical panels to account for the future load of potential charging stations; structurally accounting for rooftop loads for potential photovoltaic arrays or a potential solar thermal hot water system; and locating future shafts for tubing of a thermal hot water system.

Activity/Employment

The Project could be used as an office, biotech, and/or R&D campus, or any combination thereof. If the Project only includes office uses, then it is estimated that office spaces for approximately 1,300 employees would be generated.⁸ In general, office uses generate the need for more employees than do biotech and R&D uses. The administrative areas of biotech and R&D companies would have a density similar to a corporate office; however, the research and laboratory spaces would have lower employee densities. As such, this document assumes and analyzes the most conservative scenario of approximately 1,300 office employees at the Project site.

Utilities

Onsite utility usage would include energy, domestic water, wastewater, and storm drainage. All onsite utilities would be designed in accordance with applicable codes and current engineering practices.

Energy. Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) would provide gas and electrical power for the proposed facilities. Existing electricity and gas lines in the vicinity of the Project site would continue to serve the Project.

Domestic Water. Onsite water lines would connect to the Menlo Park Municipal Water District (MPMWD). There is one existing 6-inch domestic water main that serves the Project site. This main would be reduced to 3 inches to serve Building 1. In addition, there is one existing 8-inch easterly fire service line and one existing 10-inch westerly fire service line. The easterly line would be reused for domestic water for Building 1 and the new fire loop road. The westerly line would be reused for domestic water for Building 2 and the new fire loop road. The water lines would connect to the existing 10-inch domestic water main that parallels the southern boundary of the Project site.

Wastewater. The sanitary sewer system in this area of the City is owned and operated by the West Bay Sanitary District (WBSD). The proposed buildings would connect to the wastewater system via a 6-inch sanitary sewer main located at 180 Jefferson Drive. Wastewater from the Project site would ultimately be discharged to the South Bayside Systems Authority (SBSA) pump station in Redwood City.

Storm Drainage. The stormwater collected at the Project site would continue to be conveyed in a piped system to the existing 36-inch storm drain in Jefferson Drive. The drainage system would consist of a combination of existing and new onsite storm drains. This system would collect runoff from the parking lots, roofs, and hardscape areas and convey it to a pump. The pump would be sized to discharge the stormwater to biotreatment ponds for treatment in accordance with the C.3 MRP requirements. For larger storm events the excess flows would directly to Jefferson Drive via a pipe system. The Project would have a larger landscaped area than under existing conditions; therefore, the Project would result in a net decrease in the amount of runoff leaving the site.⁹

⁸ The Sobrato Corporation. 2012. This estimate assumes 200 sf per employee based on similar office density rates on similar office density rates on the San Francisco Peninsula. 259,920 sf of office/200 sf = ~1,300 employees.

⁹ Kier & Wright Civil Engineers and Surveyors. 2012. “Stormwater Report: 151 Commonwealth Drive & 164 Jefferson Drive, Menlo Park, California.” July 20.

2.4 Project Construction

Schedule

Construction of the Project would include the demolition of the existing features at the Project site and the construction of the proposed building. It is anticipated that the construction process would start in April 2014¹⁰ with the demolition of the existing buildings and subsequent construction of the Project would continue over approximately 15 months, with full buildout by mid-2015. It is assumed that maximum occupancy would be reached within 2 to 3 years thereafter. The following summarizes the construction schedule by phase.

- **Phase 1**–Demolition: Mid-2014 (60 days).
- **Phase 2**–Grading: Mid-2014 (6 days).
- **Phase 3**–Building construction: Mid-2014 to Mid-2015 (265 days).

Equipment and Staging

Typical equipment that would be used during construction would include, but not be limited to, concrete crushers, cranes, tractors, excavators, pile drivers, forklifts, off-highway tractors and trucks, material-handling equipment, pavers, pumpers, rollers, bulldozers, surfacing and grading equipment, backhoes, and trenchers. All construction equipment, employee vehicles, and import material would be staged onsite at the Jefferson Site.

Spoils, Debris, and Materials

Demolition. Construction would require the demolition and removal of the existing buildings, paved areas, other impervious surfaces, and vegetation at the Project site. Approximately 75 percent of all debris would be recycled. Based on this assumption, the demolition work would generate approximately 10,800 cubic yards (cy) of concrete debris, 4,500 cy of asphalt concrete debris, and 725 cy of construction and demolition (C&D) debris, which includes wood, metal roofing, and steel work.

Concrete debris could be shredded onsite prior to offhaul. Any portion of material that could not be crushed onsite would be hauled to a local recycling site, likely the facility at the Port of Redwood City.

Grading/Excavation. Approximately 12,700 cy of cut and 6,000 cy of fill would be generated by the Project. In addition, approximately 6,700 cy of export materials would be generated. No dewatering would be required.

¹⁰ When the NOP for this Project was issued in August 2012, a start date of April 2014 was anticipated. Therefore, the analysis presented in this EIR assumes an April 2014 construction start date. However, due to unforeseen delays, it is anticipated that the actual start date will be later. The construction dates are estimates and used for analytical purposes only; the delayed construction start date does not impact the accuracy of the analysis.

2.5 Project Approvals

City Approvals

The following discretionary approvals by the City would be required prior to development at the Project site.

- **Environmental Review.** Certification of the EIR (including the mitigation measures identified in the EIR), the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan, and approval of a Statement of Overriding Considerations.
- **Rezoning from M-2 to M-2(X).** A Conditional Development District would be required to exceed the standard M-2 zoning district's 35-foot height limit and build office buildings up to 62 feet in height.
- **Conditional Development Permit.** A CDP would be required to establish project specific development regulations, such as a new height limit.
- **Tentative Parcel Map.** A Tentative Parcel Map for a three-lot subdivision that would allow each four-story building to be constructed on an individual lot while sharing the use of the onsite parking and the shared project amenities.
- **Heritage Tree Removal Permit.** A tree removal permit would be required for each heritage tree proposed for removal per Municipal Code Section 13.24.040.
- **Below Market Rate Housing Agreement.** A Below Market Rate Housing Agreement would be required for the payment of in-lieu fees associated with the City's Below Market Rate Housing Program, as outlined in Chapter 16.96 of the Municipal Code.
- **Grading Permit.**
- **Building Permit.**
- **Encroachment Permit.**

Consultations with Responsible Agencies

Consultations with other agencies that may be needed for the Project are identified below. These agencies are expected to review this Draft EIR in evaluating the Project. These various agencies will need to approve certain parts of the Project prior to full implementation; however, their approval is not required for EIR certification.

- **Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD)**—permitting of asbestos abatement activities, if any, and the operational permit for the emergency generator(s).
- **California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)**—review of traffic circulation effects and consultation on potential traffic improvements affecting state highway facilities, ramps, and intersections.
- **California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Francisco Bay Region (RWQCB)/San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program**—approval of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for stormwater discharge.
- **City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG)**—review of potential effects on Routes of Regional Significance and the Project's TDM Plan.

- **Menlo Park Fire Protection District**—approval of proposed fire prevention systems and emergency vehicle access.
- **San Mateo County Environmental Health Division**—review of food service functions.
- **San Mateo County Transit District**—review of site plans adjacent to the Dumbarton Rail Corridor.
- **West Bay Sanitary District**—approval of wastewater connection.