

Section 1

Introduction

1.1 PURPOSE OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Menlo Park Facebook Campus Project (Project) has been prepared by the City of Menlo Park (City), which is the lead agency for the Project, in conformance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, as amended.¹ The lead agency is the public agency that has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project.

This Draft EIR assesses potentially significant impacts that could result from the Project. As defined in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15382, a “significant effect on the environment” is:

... a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.

As stated in the CEQA Guidelines, an EIR is an “informational document” intended to inform public agency decision-makers and the public of the significant environmental effects of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project. The City Council will consider this Draft EIR in reviewing the Project and making the final decision to certify the Final EIR (responses to comments) and to approve or deny the Project.

The City must consider the information in the Draft and Final EIR and, particularly, each significant impact resulting from the Project. The City will use the EIR, along with other information in the public record, to determine whether to approve, modify, or disapprove the Project, and to specify any applicable environmental conditions or mitigation measures as part of the Project approvals. The purpose of this Draft EIR is to provide the City, responsible and trustee agencies, other public agencies, and the public with detailed information about the environmental effects of implementing the Project, to examine and institute methods of mitigating any adverse environmental impacts should the Project be approved, and to consider feasible alternatives to the Project.

1.2 PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Facebook, Inc. (Project Sponsor) is moving its operations from its existing facilities in the City of Palo Alto to the City of Menlo Park. The Project site consists of a 56.9-acre site (East Campus), which was

¹ CEQA, *California Environmental Quality Act, Statutes and Guidelines*, Guidelines as amended January 1, 2011, published by the Governor's Office of Planning Research.

previously occupied by Oracle (formerly Sun Microsystems), and a 22-acre site (West Campus), which was formerly owned by General Motors (GM) and occupied by TE Connectivity (formerly Tyco Electronics) (Project Site). The Project proposes that Facebook occupy the East Campus as part of the first phase and then expand to the West Campus in the second phase. In total, the Project would employ approximately 9,400 employees at both campuses.

The East Campus is currently developed with nine buildings, totaling more than one million square feet (sf). To accommodate Facebook's rapid employment growth, the Project Sponsor submitted an application to the City to modify the Conditional Development Permit (CDP) that applies to the East Campus. The Project Sponsor proposes to convert the 3,600-employee cap included in the CDP into a vehicle trip cap for the AM and PM peak periods and daily trips. According to the Project Sponsor, this approach is designed to minimize traffic, air quality, and greenhouse gas emission impacts, while still allowing approximately 6,600 workers to occupy the East Campus. It is estimated that the East Campus would reach full capacity by 2014 or 2015. Tenant Improvements (TIs) are also being undertaken to convert existing hardware-intensive laboratory spaces and individual hard-wall offices to a more open, shared workspace characteristic of the Facebook work environment. However, the TIs are being done through ministerial building permits and are not part of the Project.²

Approximately half of the West Campus is currently developed with two office buildings totaling 127,246 sf, an asphalt parking area, a guard house, and landscape features, but the entire site is currently unoccupied. The West Campus is zoned M-2 and designated General Industrial in the City's General Plan. The existing buildings at the West Campus would be demolished and developed with office buildings and amenities structures, totaling approximately 440,000 sf. Although the Project Sponsor does not intend to apply for entitlements for the West Campus at this time, this subsequent phase of development is evaluated as part of the Project in this Draft EIR. Facebook estimates that the West Campus would be operational by mid-2014 and would reach maximum occupancy of approximately 2,800 employees within two to three years thereafter.

1.3 NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND EIR SCOPE

Notice of Preparation

The Notice of Preparation (NOP) was released for the Project on April 21, 2011 for a 36-day public review period. A public scoping meeting was held on May 16, 2011 before the Planning Commission. The NOP noted that the Project may have a significant effect on the environment and that an EIR would be prepared for the Project. A copy of the NOP is provided in Appendix 1 of this Draft EIR.

The NOP was sent to individuals, local interest groups, adjacent property owners, and responsible and trustee State and local agencies having jurisdiction or interest over environmental resources and/or

² In addition to the TIs, the Project Sponsor proposed new construction on the East Campus resulting in an increase in gross floor area, which required approval of a use permit in the M-2 zoning district. The addition of approximately 1,400 sf to accommodate two small structures in the courtyard area and minor additions to Buildings 11 and 15 for two security control points was subject to CEQA review but determined to be categorically exempt under Class 3 (Section 15303) of the CEQA Guidelines.

conditions in the vicinity of the Project Site. The purpose of the NOP was to allow various private and public entities to transmit their concerns and comments on the scope and content of the Draft EIR, focusing on specific information related to each individual's or group's interest or agency's statutory responsibility early in the environmental review process.

In response to the NOP, letters were received from the following agencies:

- California Department of Transportation
- California Native Plant Society, Santa Clara Valley Chapter
- Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge
- City of East Palo Alto
- Department of Toxic Substances Control
- East Palo Alto Bicycle Club
- Envision, Transform, Build EPA Coalition
- San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
- San Francisco Bay Trail Project
- Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition
- West Bay Sanitary District

In addition, five letters were received from individuals and four members of the public made oral comments at the Planning Commission hearing. Copies of these NOP comment letters and comments recorded at the Planning Commission hearing are included in Appendix 1 of this Draft EIR.

The NOP concluded that the following environmental topics would be addressed as separate sections in this Draft EIR:

- Land Use
- Aesthetics
- Wind
- Transportation
- Air Quality
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Noise
- Cultural Resources
- Biological Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hydrology/Flood Hazards
- Hazardous Materials
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Utilities and Service Systems

The Project would not result in significant environmental impacts to agricultural, forestry, or mineral resources since none of these resources exist at the Project site. A detailed analysis of these topics is therefore not included in the Draft EIR; however, these topics are briefly discussed in Section 3.1, Introduction to the Environmental Analysis.

Draft EIR and Public Review

This Draft EIR provides an analysis of physical impacts anticipated to result from the Project. Where significant impacts are identified, the Draft EIR recommends feasible mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate the significant impacts and identifies which significant impacts are unavoidable. Alternatives to the Project are also presented (Section 5). This environmental document is considered a draft under CEQA since it must be reviewed and commented upon by public agencies, organizations, and individuals before being finalized.

This Draft EIR is being distributed for a minimum of a 45-day public review and comment period. Readers are invited to submit written comments on the document (e.g., does this Draft EIR identify and analyze the possible environmental impacts and recommend appropriate mitigation measures? Does it consider and evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives?). Comments are most helpful when they suggest specific alternatives or measures that would better mitigate significant environmental effects. Written comments should be submitted to:

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Community Development Department, Planning Division
701 Laurel Street
Menlo Park, CA 94025
Email: rmgrossman@menlopark.org

A public hearing to take oral comments on the Draft EIR will be held before the Planning Commission on January 9, 2012. Hearing notices will be mailed to responsible agencies and interested individuals.

Final EIR and Project Approval

Following the close of the public review period, the City will prepare responses to all substantive comments that relate to potential physical changes to the environment. The Draft EIR, along with the responses to the substantive comments received during the review period, will comprise the Final EIR and will be considered by the City Council in making the decision to certify the Final EIR and to approve or deny the Project.

Certification of the Final EIR by the City Council as complete and adequate in conformance with CEQA does not grant any land use approvals or entitlements for the Project. The merits of the Project will be considered by the City Council in tandem with review of the Final EIR. The CEQA Guidelines require that, for one or more significant unavoidable impacts that cannot be substantially mitigated, the Lead Agency (City of Menlo Park), must prepare a Statement of Overriding Considerations in which the Lead Agency balances the social, economic, technological, and legal benefits of approving a project against the significant and unavoidable environmental impacts which would result from project

implementation. This Statement of Overriding Considerations must be approved by the City Council in order for the Project to be approved.

1.4 EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The environmental effects from implementing the Project are considered in this Draft EIR. Current environmental conditions (the environmental setting or baseline) under which the Project would be implemented are considered in determining impact significance. If it is determined that a potential impact is too speculative for evaluation, this condition is noted and further discussion of the impact is not necessary.

In accordance with Section 15143 of the CEQA Guidelines, this Draft EIR focuses on the significant effects on the environment resulting from construction and operation of the Project. Each major topic (e.g., Aesthetics, Biological Resources, Transportation, etc.) provides criteria or standards of significance for evaluating whether an environmental impact is significant or less than significant. The criteria presented in this Draft EIR are based on information contained in the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, *Environmental Checklist Form*, which establishes thresholds of impact significance. In addition, this document uses City-adopted significance criteria for traffic impacts. As explained in Section 15002(g) of the CEQA Guidelines, a significant effect on the environment is defined as a substantial adverse change in the physical conditions which exist in the area affected by the Project.

Determining the significance, or severity, of an impact rests with understanding the criteria for determining a significant impact. If the criterion for determining a significant impact is not met, the impact is considered less than significant. If the criterion is exceeded, a significant impact would occur and feasible mitigation measures are proposed. The mitigation measures are intended to modify the Project such that the impact is avoided or reduced to below the significance criteria. If the mitigation measures would not reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level, the impact is considered significant and unavoidable. Cumulative impacts are discussed at the end of each technical section of this Draft EIR. A cumulative impact refers to two or more individual effects that, when considered together, compound or increase the environmental impact under consideration or other related environmental impacts.

1.5 ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EFFECTS

Section 15131 of the CEQA Guidelines specifies that the economic or social effects of a project shall not be treated as significant effects on the environment. However, “an EIR may trace a chain of cause and effect from a proposed decision on a project through anticipated economic or social changes resulting from the project to physical changes caused in turn by the economic or social changes. The intermediate economic or social changes need not be analyzed in any detail greater than necessary to trace the chain of cause and effect. The focus of the analysis shall be on the physical changes.” Accordingly, this Draft EIR focuses on physical changes that could be caused due to implementation of the Project. Nevertheless, a housing needs analysis for the Project was prepared by Keyser Marston

Associates (KMA) and is included as Appendix 3.14 of this Draft EIR for informational purposes. Although the Project would not include the construction of new housing (a direct physical impact), the Project would trigger the demand for new housing in the area to accommodate the increase in employees (an indirect impact).

1.6 REPORT ORGANIZATION

This Draft EIR is organized into the following sections:

- *Summary*: Provides a summary of the Project and of the impacts that would result from its implementation, and describes mitigation measures recommended to reduce or avoid significant impacts. A discussion of alternatives to the Project is also provided.
- *Section 1 – Introduction*: Discusses the overall Draft EIR purpose, provides a summary of the Project and the Draft EIR scope, and summarizes the organization of the Draft EIR.
- *Section 2 – Project Description*: Provides a description of the Project site, site development, Project objectives, required approval process, and details of the Project itself.
- *Section 3 – Environmental Analysis*: Describes the existing conditions (setting), environmental impact assessment, and mitigation measures for each environmental technical topic.
- *Section 4 – Other CEQA Considerations*: Provides additional specifically-required analyses of the Project’s effects, significant irreversible changes, cumulative impacts, and effects not found to be significant.
- *Section 5 – Alternatives*: Provides an evaluation of one alternative to the Project in addition to the No Project alternative.