

111 INDEPENDENCE DRIVE PROJECT DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2019060108

MENLO PARK, CALIFORNIA



LSA

December 2020

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**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
111 INDEPENDENCE DRIVE PROJECT
SCH NO. 2019060108
CITY OF MENLO PARK**

Date: December 4, 2020

To: State Clearinghouse
State Responsible Agencies
State Trustee Agencies
Other Public Agencies
Interested Organizations

From: Payal Bhagat
Consulting Planner
City of Menlo Park
701 Laurel Street
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Subject: **Notice of Availability (NOA) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the 111 Independence Drive Project**

Lead Agency: City of Menlo Park, Planning Division

Project Title: 111 Independence Drive Project

Project Area: Bayfront Area, City of Menlo Park

Notice is hereby given that the City of Menlo Park (City), as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act, has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed 111 Independence Drive Project (proposed project). In accordance with Section 15087 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City has prepared this Notice of Availability (NOA) to invite agencies, organizations, and interested parties to provide comments on the Draft EIR.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: December 4, 2020 – February 2, 2021

Comments on the Draft EIR will be accepted as part of the Planning Commission meeting on **January 11, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.** In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Planning Commission meeting will be held remotely via GoToWebinar or Zoom, which can be accessed at menlopark.org/PlanningCommission.

Written comments on the Draft EIR may also be sent to:

Payal Bhagat
City of Menlo Park
Community Development Department, Planning Division
701 Laurel Street
Menlo Park, CA 94025
PBhagat@menlopark.org
Phone: 650.330.6702

Comments on the Draft EIR are due no later than the close of the Draft EIR review period (5:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, February 2, 2021**). However, we would appreciate your response at the earliest possible date. Please send your written comments to Payal Bhagat at the address shown above or by email to PBhagat@menlopark.org with “111 Independence Drive Project EIR” as the subject. Public agencies that provide comments are asked to include a contact person for the agency.

The Draft EIR is available online at: <https://www.menlopark.org/1571/111-Independence-Drive>. A hard copy is also available for a curbside pickup at the Menlo Park Main Library. Please visit menlopark.org/library for more information on how to reserve this document. If you require additional assistance, please contact Payal Bhagat at PBhagat@menlopark.org.

PROJECT LOCATION AND EXISTING CONDITIONS: The project site is located north of US Highway 101 (US 101) in the City of Menlo Park. The site is bounded by a single-story commercial and office building and Constitution Drive to the north, a single-story office building to the east, Independence Drive and the Menlo Gateway Project to the south, and Independence Drive and Marsh Road to the west.

The project site is designated Mixed Use Residential within the Bayfront Area on the City’s General Plan Land Use Designations Map and is within the Residential-Mixed Use-Bonus Zoning District (R-MU-B). The generally-level site is currently developed with an approximately 15,000-square-foot single-story office building. The existing building was constructed in 1972 and is currently occupied by a commercial business. Vegetation on the project site consists of landscaped areas along the site perimeter fronting Independence Drive. A small portion (approximately 87.8 square feet) of the Independence Drive right-of-way is located within the project site. A public utility easement, approximately 10 feet in width, runs along the eastern border of the project site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The proposed project would result in the redevelopment of the project site with an approximately 145,679-gross-square-foot, eight-story multi-family apartment building with 105 dwelling units and an approximately 746-square-foot commercial space, as well as associated open space, circulation and parking, and infrastructure improvements. In addition, the proposed project would include dedication of the approximately 87.8 square feet of Independence Drive that are currently within the project site as well as a public access easement to construct a portion of the public sidewalk within the project site. The project sponsor is currently proposing that 15 percent of the units (or 14 units) would comply with the City’s Below Market Rate (BMR) Housing Program Ordinance, Menlo Park Municipal Code, Chapter 16.96, and the City’s BMR Housing Program Guidelines. Density above the maximum bonus level residential density and gross floor area would be achieved through the density bonus provision of the City’s Below Market Rate Housing Program.

The ground floor would be raised 30 inches above grade to accommodate flood plain design requirements. The proposed building would have a maximum height of 85 feet not including parapet walls, mechanical equipment, and elevator and stair overruns. An at-grade, three-level, approximately 49,624-square-foot, 109-space parking garage would be located within the proposed building at the northeast corner. A total of approximately 14,143 square feet of private, common, and publicly accessible open space would be provided at the ground floor and the fourth and eighth floors of the proposed building.

PROJECT APPROVALS: The following City discretionary approvals would be required prior to development at the project site:

- EIR Certification
- Adoption of Findings

- Use Permit
- Architectural Control
- Below Market Rate Housing Agreement

In order to qualify for bonus-level development within the R-MU-B zoning district, the proposed project will also be required to complete an appraisal process to identify the value of the community amenities to be provided in exchange for the opportunity to develop at the bonus level. The project sponsor's community amenity proposal is subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission and/or City Council. There will be a fiscal impact analysis conducted regarding the proposed project.

RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES: The City requests the following agencies review the analysis within the Draft EIR regarding information relevant to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15086. Your agency may need to use the EIR prepared by the City when considering any permits or other approvals that your agency must issue for the proposed project.

- Pacific Gas & Electric
- California Department of Transportation
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board/ San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program
- City/County Association of Governments
- Bay Area Air Quality Management District
- San Mateo County Transportation Authority
- Menlo Park Fire Protection District
- West Bay Sanitary District

INTRODUCTION TO EIR: The project site is within the ConnectMenlo study area. ConnectMenlo, which updated the City's General Plan Land Use and Circulation Elements and rezoned the land in the M-2 Area (now referred to as the Bayfront Area), was approved on November 29, 2016. Because the City's General Plan is a long-range planning document, the ConnectMenlo Final EIR was prepared as a program EIR, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. Section 15168(d) of the CEQA Guidelines provides information for simplifying the preparation of subsequent environmental documents by incorporating by reference analyses and discussions. CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(d) states that where an EIR has been prepared and certified for a program or plan, the environmental review for a later activity consistent with the program or plan should be limited to the effects that were not analyzed as significant in the prior EIR or susceptible to substantial reduction or avoidance.

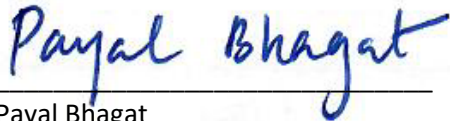
An Initial Study for the project, which is also available for review online at <https://www.menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/21871/Initial-Study>, was prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and determine what level of additional environmental review would be appropriate, and was released on June 14, 2019, with a public review period from June 14, 2019, through July 15, 2019. In accordance with the requirements outlined in Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines, the project-level Initial Study was prepared to disclose the relevant impacts and mitigation measures addressed in the certified program-level ConnectMenlo EIR and discuss whether the project is within the parameters of the ConnectMenlo EIR or additional analysis would be necessary. In addition, as a result of the settlement agreement between the City of Menlo Park and the City of East Palo Alto, housing and transportation are required to be analyzed. Based on the findings of the Initial Study, a Draft EIR was prepared to address potential physical environmental effects of the proposed project for the following topics: Population and Housing;

Transportation; Air Quality; Greenhouse Gas Emissions; and Noise (Operation Period Traffic and Stationary Noise).

SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The Draft EIR does not identify any significant and unavoidable environmental impacts from the proposed project. The proposed project would result in potentially significant impacts related to Air Quality and Noise, but these impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level with implementation of identified mitigation measures. Impacts related to Population and Housing, Transportation, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions would be less than significant.

HAZARDS MATERIALS AND HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES: The project site is not located on any list of hazardous materials waste sites compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

EIR PROCESS: In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15105(a), the Draft EIR will be available for public review and comment for a 45-day review period, which has been extended to 60 days to account for the winter holidays and the closure of City facilities from December 24, 2020, until January 4, 2021. Following the close of the public review period on February 2, 2021, the City will prepare a Final EIR, which will include responses to all substantive comments received on the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR and Final EIR will be considered by the City Council in making the decision to certify the EIR and final action on the project.



Payal Bhagat
City of Menlo Park

December 4, 2020

111 INDEPENDENCE DRIVE PROJECT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2019060108

MENLO PARK, CALIFORNIA

Submitted to:

City of Menlo Park
Community Development Department
Planning Division
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December 2020

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

°C	Celsius
°F	Fahrenheit
µg /m ³	micrograms per cubic meter
AADT	annual average daily traffic
AB 1493	Assembly Bill 1493, California Vehicular Emissions: Greenhouse Gases (2002)
AB 197	Assembly Bill 197
AB 32	Assembly Bill 32, California Global Warming Solutions Act (2006)
ABAG	Association of Bay Area Governments
AC	air conditioning
AC Transit	Alameda-Contra Costa County Transit District
ACR	American Carbon Registry
AMI	average median income
APS	Alternative Planning Strategy
BAAQMD	Bay Area Air Quality Management District
BART	Bay Area Rapid Transit
Bay Area	San Francisco Bay Area
BMPs	best management practices
BMR	below market rate
C/CAG	City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County
C ₂ F ₆	Hexafluoromethane
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
CalEPA	California Environmental Protection Agency

CALGreen	California Green Building Standards Code
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CAPCOA	California Air Pollution Control Officers Association
CAR	Climate Action Reserve
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CARE	Community Air Risk Evaluation
CAT	Climate Action Team
CBIA	California Building Industry Association
CCAA	California Clean Air Act
Census	United States Census Bureau
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CF ₄	Tetrafluoromethane
CH ₄	Methane
chloroethene	vinyl chloride
City	City of Menlo Park (incorporated municipality)
city	geographical area
Class I	bike path, multi-use pathway
Class II	bike lane
Class III	bike route
Class IV	protected bike lane
Clean Air Plan	Bay Area Clean Air Plan
CLUP	Comprehensive Land Use Plan
CMP	Congestion Management Plan
CNEL	community noise equivalent level

CO	carbon monoxide
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
CO ₂ e	CO ₂ equivalents
ConnectMenlo	City of Menlo Park General Plan: ConnectMenlo, Menlo Park Land Use and Mobility Update
ConnectMenlo EIR	ConnectMenlo Final Environmental Impact Report
dB	decibel
DB, DB1	Dumbarton Express
dBA	A-weighted decibels
DOF	Department of Finance
DPR	Department of Parks and Recreation
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EPP	Environmental Preferable Purchasing Policy
ESA	Environmental Site Assessment
EV	electric vehicle
EVA	emergency vehicle access
FAR	floor area ratio
FCAA	Federal Clean Air Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FIP	Federal Implementation Plan
GHG	greenhouse gas(es)/emissions
GSP	Gross State Product
GWP	Global Warming Potential
HAA	Housing Accountability Act

HARP2	Hotspots Analysis Reporting Program
HCA	Housing Crisis Act
HCD	Housing and Community Development
HFCs	Hydrofluorocarbons
HNA	Housing Needs Assessment
HOV	high occupancy vehicle
HRA	Health Risk Assessment
HVAC	air conditioning
I-280	Interstate 280
IC	internal combustion
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ITE	Institute of Transportation Engineers
L _{dn}	noise level
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
L _{eq}	sound level
L _{max}	maximum noise level
LOS	level of service
LTS	less-than-significant impact
LTS/M	less than significant with mitigation
MEI	maximally exposed individual
MERV	minimum efficiency reporting value
mg/m ³	milligrams per cubic meter
MLD	most likely descendant
MMRP	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
MMT	million metric tons

MPFPD	Menlo Park Fire Protection District
mph	miles per hour
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MPPD	Menlo Park Police Department
MTC	Metropolitan Transportation Commission
N ₂ O	Nitrous oxide
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NB	northbound
NO ₂	nitrogen dioxide
NOP	Notice of Preparation
NO _x	Nitrogen Oxides
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NWIC	Northwest Information Center
O	Office
O ₃	ozone
OPR	Governor's Office of Planning and Research
Pb	lead
PFCs	Perfluorocarbons
PG&E	Pacific Gas & Electric
PM	particulate matter
PM ₁₀	particulate matter less than 10 microns in aerodynamic diameter
PM _{2.5}	particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in size
POTWs	publicly owned treatment works
ppb	parts per billion

ppm	parts per million
proposed project	111 Independence Drive Project
PS	potentially significant impact
PSA	Permit Streamlining Act
RHNA	Regional Housing Needs Allocation
R-MU	Residential Mixed Use
R-MU-B	Residential Mixed Use Bonus
ROG	reactive organic gases
RPS	Renewable Portfolio Standard
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
SamTrans	San Mateo County Transit District
SB 32	Senate Bill 32, California Global Warming Solutions Act (2016)
SB 100	Senate Bill 100, California Renewable Portfolio Standard (2018)
SB 330	Senate Bill 330, Housing Crisis Act (2019)
SB 350	Senate Bill 350, Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act (2015)
SB 743	Senate Bill 743, Modernizing Transportation Analysis (2013)
SCS	Sustainable Community Strategies
SF ₆	Sulfur Hexafluoride
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SMCWPPP	San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program
SO ₂	sulfur dioxide
SOV	single-occupancy vehicle
SO _x	sulfur oxides
SR 82	State Route 82 (El Camino Real)

SR 84	State Route 84 (Bayfront Expressway)
SR 109	State Route 109 (University Avenue)
SR 114	State Route 114 (Willow Road)
SU	significant unavoidable impact
TACs	toxic air contaminants
TAFH	time away from home
TAZ	transportation analysis zone
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
TIA	Transportation Impact Analysis
TIF	Transportation Impact Fee
TMA	Transportation Management Association
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UPRR	Union Pacific Railroad
US 101	US Highway 101 (Bayshore Freeway)
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
WHO	World Health Organization

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS EIR

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) describes the potential environmental impacts of the proposed 111 Independence Drive Project (project) submitted by SP Menlo, LLC (the project sponsor). The City of Menlo Park (City) is the CEQA Lead Agency for environmental review.

The purpose of this EIR is to inform City decision-makers, responsible agencies, and the general public about the proposed project and the potential physical environmental consequences of project implementation. This EIR also examines alternatives to the proposed project and recommends mitigation measures to reduce or avoid potentially significant physical environmental impacts, to the extent feasible. This EIR will be used as an informational document by the City's Planning Commission and/or City Council, responsible agencies, and the public in their review of the proposed project and associated approvals described below and in more detail in Chapter 3.0, Project Description.

1.2 PROPOSED PROJECT

The approximately 0.92-acre triangular project site is located at 111 Independence Drive within the Bayfront Area of the City of Menlo Park, San Mateo County. The project site is currently bounded by a single-story commercial and office building to the north; a single-story office building to the east;¹ Independence Drive and the Menlo Gateway office project to the south; and Independence Drive and Marsh Road to the west. The project site is currently developed with an approximately 15,000-square-foot, single-story office building. A small portion (approximately 87.8 square feet) of the Independence Drive right-of-way is located within the project site.

The proposed project would result in redevelopment of the project site with an approximately 145,679-gross-square-foot, eight-story multi-family apartment building with approximately 105 dwelling units and an approximately 746-square-foot commercial space, as well as associated open space, a parking garage, and infrastructure improvements. In addition, the proposed project would include dedication of the approximately 87.8-square-foot portion of Independence Drive that is currently within the project site, as well as a public access easement to construct a portion of the public sidewalk within the project site.

Discretionary actions by the City that would be necessary for development of the proposed project include certification of the EIR and adoption of Findings, a Use Permit, Architectural Control, and Below Market Rate Housing Agreement.

¹ The City has received a development application, which is currently proposed to result in the construction of an approximately 335-unit multi-family residential building and approximately 34,868-square-foot commercial office building, for the neighboring properties at 115 Independence Drive, and 104 and 110 Constitution Drive (known as the Menlo Portal Project).

1.3 EIR SCOPE

The City circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) notifying responsible agencies and interested parties that an EIR would be prepared for the proposed project and indicated the environmental topics anticipated to be addressed in the EIR. An Initial Study was circulated with the NOP. The NOP was published on June 14, 2019, and was mailed to public agencies, organizations, and individuals likely to be interested in the potential impacts of the proposed project. A scoping session was held as a public meeting before the Planning Commission on June 24, 2019, to solicit feedback regarding the scope and content of the EIR. Both verbal comments during the scoping session and five written comments on the NOP were received by the City and considered during preparation of this EIR. Copies of the NOP, comment letters, and a transcription of the verbal comments received are included in Appendix A.

Based on the preliminary analysis provided in the Initial Study (Appendix B), consultation with City staff, and review of the comments received during the scoping process, the following environmental topics are addressed in Chapter 4.0, Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures, of this EIR:

- 4.1 Population and Housing
- 4.2 Transportation
- 4.3 Air Quality
- 4.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- 4.5 Noise (Operation Period Traffic and Stationary Noise)

It has been determined that the following potential environmental effects of the proposed project would be less than significant or have no impact; and therefore, these topics are not further studied in detail in this EIR: aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise (construction-period and aircraft-related noise), public services, recreation, utilities and service systems, and wildfire. Each of these topic areas is addressed in the Initial Study (Appendix B). Although the Initial Study identified tribal cultural resources as a potential topic to be analyzed in the EIR, further evaluation determined that impacts to tribal cultural resources would be less than significant; therefore, this topic is not included as a separate section of the EIR. Chapter 5.0, Other CEQA Considerations, of this EIR provides a summary of the analysis and conclusions for each environmental topic evaluated in the Initial Study and not further addressed in Chapter 4.0. Given that many topic areas were scoped out and only five topic areas will be evaluated in detail in this EIR, the document may also be referred to as a focused EIR. The analysis provided in this EIR and the Initial Study tier from the certified ConnectMenlo Final Environmental Impact Report (ConnectMenlo Final EIR),^{1,2} as appropriate and as further described in each topical section.

¹ Menlo Park, City of. 2016. *ConnectMenlo: General Plan Land Use and Circulation Elements and M-2 Area Zoning Update, Public Review Draft Environmental Impact Report*, SCH#2015062054. Prepared by Placeworks. June 1.

² Menlo Park, City of. 2016. *ConnectMenlo: General Plan Land Use and Circulation Elements and M-2 Area Zoning Update, Response to Comments Document*, SCH#2015062054. Prepared by Placeworks. October 10.

1.4 REPORT ORGANIZATION

This EIR is organized into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1.0 – Introduction:** Discusses the overall EIR purpose, provides a summary of the proposed project, describes the EIR scope, and summarizes the organization of the EIR.
- **Chapter 2.0 – Summary:** Provides a summary of the impacts that would result from implementation of the proposed project, describes mitigation measures recommended to reduce or avoid significant environmental impacts, and describes the alternatives to the proposed project.
- **Chapter 3.0 – Project Description:** Provides a description of the project site, project background, project objectives, proposed project, and uses of this EIR.
- **Chapter 4.0 – Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures:** Describes the following for each technical environmental topic: existing conditions (setting), summary of ConnectMenlo Final EIR impacts and required mitigation measures, potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and their level of significance, and mitigation measures recommended to reduce or avoid identified potential impacts. Potential cumulative impacts are also addressed in each topical section. Potential adverse impacts are identified by levels of significance, as follows: less-than-significant impact (LTS), potentially significant impact (PS), less-than-significant impact with mitigation (LTS/M), and significant and unavoidable impact (SU). The significance of each potential impact is categorized before and after implementation of any recommended mitigation measure(s).
- **Chapter 5.0 – Other CEQA Considerations:** Provides an analysis of effects found not to be significant, including the Initial Study findings; growth-inducing impacts; unavoidable significant environmental impacts; and significant irreversible changes.
- **Chapter 6.0 – Alternatives:** Provides an evaluation of two alternative(s) to the proposed project in addition to the CEQA-required No Project alternative.
- **Chapter 7.0 – Report Preparation:** Identifies preparers of the EIR and references used.
- **Appendices:** The appendices contain the NOP and comment letters (Appendix A); the Initial Study (Appendix B); an Addendum to the Initial Study to address revisions made after its publication (Appendix C); a Housing Needs Assessment (Appendix D); a Transportation Impact Analysis (Appendix E); Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data (Appendix F); Health Risk Assessment Data (Appendix G); and Noise Data (Appendix H). All appendices are included on a compact disc on the inside back cover of the printed EIR.

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