
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, this environmental impact report (EIR) has been prepared by the City of Redwood City to describe the environmental consequences of a City-proposed Downtown Precise Plan project. The project, as articulated in the *Public Review Draft Downtown Precise Plan*, summer 2006 (Draft Precise Plan), is comprised of objectives, goals, strategies, actions, and development regulations intended to establish a contemporary "vision" for the City's approximately 193-acre Downtown area, and sets forth the specific land use parameters, development standards, and urban design criteria necessary to facilitate and guide successful development in a manner consistent with that vision.

The proposed overall Precise Plan objective is to assist the City and the City's Redevelopment Agency in providing for, and encouraging buildout of, a unique and robust Downtown. The Precise Plan intent is to provide for restructuring land use, density, architectural character, streetscapes, and parking provisions as necessary to create a well-designed, contemporary, and financially viable Downtown. The Draft Precise Plan includes standards (mandatory) and guidelines (preferred, not mandatory) for site development (e.g., land use, building heights, setbacks, frontages); streets, landscaping, and public space; parking; architecture; and signage in the Precise Plan area.

A stated specific objective of the Precise Plan is to provide for more housing concentrated in the Downtown. The Precise Plan, in concert with the City's Draft General Plan *Housing Element*, is intended to provide for the expansion of city housing choices by encouraging compact, transit-accessible, pedestrian-oriented housing and mixed use (commercial/housing) development in the Downtown at densities and heights greater than currently permitted. The Draft Precise Plan stipulates that this Downtown housing development be conveniently located near public transportation, shopping, employment, and other community facilities.

The Draft Precise Plan refers to City Council determination of a Maximum Allowable Development (M.A.D.) limitation or "cap," specifying the maximum combined amount of additional residential development (units), office and retail development (floor area) and commercial lodging development (hotel rooms) to be permitted within the Precise Plan area. The ultimate M.A.D. limitation figures will be determined by the City Council based on consideration of the results of this EIR and other pertinent documentation, and on the related recommendations of the Planning Commission. The Draft Precise Plan stipulates that, within the referenced M.A.D. development increment limitations, all future development in the Precise Plan area shall conform to the development standards established in the Precise Plan.

City staff has identified a "Maximum Intensity" alternative and a less-intensive "Moderate Intensity" alternative that are considered to represent the range of M.A.D. limitations for the Precise Plan area that may ultimately be adopted by the City Council. In general, the Moderate Intensity development increments total approximately two-thirds (66.6 percent) of the Maximum Intensity development increments, with adjustments to reflect specific ground floor retail and commercial lodging development objectives identified in the Draft Precise Plan.

Under the Maximum Intensity alternative, the Precise Plan would facilitate development of up to approximately 3,700 net additional residential units, 600,000 net additional square feet of office floor area, 295,000 net additional square feet of retail floor area, and 200 net additional lodging (hotel) rooms in the Precise Plan area. Also, the Maximum Intensity scenario would ultimately result in a net reduction of approximately 95,000 square feet of industrial floor area.

Under the Moderate Intensity alternative, the Precise Plan would facilitate development of up to approximately 2,500 net additional residential units, 275,000 net additional square feet of office floor area, 221,000 net additional square feet of retail floor area, and 200 net additional lodging (hotel) rooms in the Precise Plan area. Similar to the Maximum Intensity alternative, the Moderate Intensity alternative would also ultimately result in a net reduction of approximately 95,000 square feet of industrial floor area.

Key environmental impact findings and mitigation recommendations identified in this EIR are listed below:

(1) Land Use and Planning Impacts. The EIR concludes that overall, the Draft Precise Plan is consistent with the City of Redwood City Strategic General Plan. The Precise Plan objective to encourage housing concentrated in the downtown in compact, transit-accessible, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use (ground floor commercial) forms, conveniently located near transportation, shopping, employment, and other community facilities, and associated Precise Plan-recommended Development Standards, are consistent with adopted General Plan policies calling for: "pleasant residential neighborhoods"; concentration of "future growth, both commercial and residential east of El Camino Real in the downtown"; encouragement of development and growth Downtown as one of the City's major commercial areas; location of residential development where services and facilities can be provided; promotion of higher residential densities at locations near or within commercial, financial, employment and transportation centers; promotion of the revitalization, upgrading and beautification of the Downtown; planning for more intensive, higher density land uses along public transit routes, including "apartments, condominiums, and multi-story office and retail buildings"; amendment of the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance to identify and designate areas for mixed use development and provide flexibility in building design and parking standards; providing for future development and redevelopment around the Redwood City Caltrain station; designation of areas for mixed use and higher density residential development to create pedestrian-oriented environments; and amendment of the City's Zoning requirements for the Downtown to better accommodate "transit- and pedestrian-oriented mixed use development" and "create a more pedestrian-oriented built environment."

The EIR concludes that implementation of the Draft Precise Plan would reinforce, with no substantial change to, established community-wide land use patterns. In general, the Precise Plan Maximum Intensity alternative, in comparison to existing zoning, would permit a higher residential development increment (approximately a 12 percent increase), a reduced office development increment (approximately a 35 percent decrease) and essentially the same increment of retail and lodging development. In general, the Precise Plan Moderate Intensity alternative, in comparison to existing zoning, would permit a lower residential development increment (approximately a 24 percent decrease), a substantially reduced office development increment (approximately a 70 percent decrease), a slightly decreased retail development increment (approximately a 20 percent decrease), and essentially the same lodging development increment, in comparison to current zoning allowance.

The two Precise Plan buildout alternatives would not permit substantially different buildout totals than would be permissible under current zoning; however, it is anticipated that the likelihood that the permitted buildout totals would be realized over the next 20 years would be substantially increased by the updated, contemporary Downtown development concepts and revitalization strategies included in the Draft Precise Plan.

The EIR indicates that the Precise Plan land use provisions and development standards would be expected to encourage increased Downtown area infill activity, with significant beneficial land use effects in: revitalizing the City's historic Downtown; facilitating concentrated development where services and infrastructure can be most efficiently provided; promoting higher residential densities near or within an existing shopping, service, employment, and public transportation center; and promoting compact, transit-accessible, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use development patterns and land reuse. The EIR concludes that these Downtown Precise Plan buildout scenario land use characteristics would epitomize the principles of "smart growth" and represent beneficial environmental effects. Based on current CEQA criteria, no significant adverse land use impact has been identified and no mitigation is required.

(2) Population and Housing Impacts. The EIR indicates that the proposed Precise Plan, in concert with the City's new General Plan *Housing Element*, would provide for the expansion of city housing choices by encouraging compact, transit-accessible, pedestrian-oriented housing and mixed use (commercial/housing) development in the Downtown at densities and heights greater than currently permitted. Under the Maximum Intensity project alternative, development in accordance with the proposed Precise Plan would provide a net increase of up to 3,700 housing units. Under the Moderate Intensity project alternative, development in accordance with the proposed Precise Plan would provide a net increase of up to 2,500 housing units. These housing unit increases would result in a local housing supply benefit. Based on current CEQA criteria, no significant adverse population or housing impact has been identified and no mitigation is required.

(3) Aesthetic and Visual Resources Impacts. The existing pattern of zoning-based building height limitations is highly varied throughout the Precise Plan area. At some locations, large building height differences are currently permitted between adjacent subareas, including visually sensitive Downtown edges adjacent to existing single-family residential neighborhoods. Most of the Downtown has not been developed to the maximum building heights permitted by current zoning. Existing buildings greater than three stories are not concentrated in a particular "precinct," but rather are located at numerous locations throughout the Precise Plan area. As a consequence, the City's Downtown district is visually characterized by an irregular physical form which is not distinctly discernable from areas surrounding the Downtown.

The Draft Precise Plan proposes substantial revisions to existing Downtown building height limitations. Building heights up to 12 stories would be permitted in the central core subarea--i.e., on approximately 20 percent of the Precise Plan area; building heights of up to 8 and 10 stories would be permitted in the areas surrounding the central core--i.e., on approximately 65 percent of the Precise Plan area; and building heights of up to 4 to 5 stores would be permitted at the Brewster Avenue, El Camino Real and Maple Street edges of the area. These proposed building height changes would promote an upward graduation in building heights from the Downtown edges towards the Downtown core. The proposed increase in building height limitations in the central core subarea from an existing maximum of 9 stories to a revised maximum of 12 stories would be offset by the proposed reduction in building height limitations

on the Downtown periphery from an existing maximum of 7-to-9 stories to a revised maximum of 4-to-8 stories.

The EIR notes that existing zoning does not foster an appropriate visual (scale) transition to adjacent residential neighborhoods at the edges of the Downtown area. The Draft Precise Plan calls for introduction of a new "transition zone" along the Brewster Avenue and Maple Street edges of the Downtown area in order to better avoid future conflicts in building scale and provide a more appropriate transition in scale at these residential neighborhood edges. Within these two "transition zones," the Draft Precise Plan requires a maximum 3 story streetwall followed by a 20 ft. step-back to the 4th or 5th stories to complete the desired gradual step-down effect from the Downtown core towards these outer edges.

The EIR concludes that the Precise Plan-proposed height limitation and step-back refinements would substantially reduce existing potentials for inappropriate building height and scale relationships, and would provide for a substantial long-term improvement in building height and scale relationships at sensitive Downtown area edges.

The EIR also concludes that the Precise Plan-proposed pattern of building height limitation revisions would promote a more organized, harmonious and discernable Downtown form; an increase in internal visual conformance among structures; and an increase in overall visual unity. The EIR finds that the Precise Plan-proposed building height limitation revisions and Precise Plan-proposed "towerwall step-back" and "relational height" requirements would substantially improve design control in comparison to the City's existing zoning and design guideline provisions for the Downtown. The Precise Plan-proposed "towerwall step-back" and "relational height" provisions for selected street frontages would promote visually appropriate step-backs at the third, fourth and fifth story, thereby minimizing or avoiding incongruous building height and scale relationships with significant buildings and adjacent residential areas.

The EIR concludes that no designated scenic vistas or view corridors would be disrupted or significantly altered by the proposed building height limitation revisions, including the increase in maximum permissible building heights at the Downtown core from 9 to 12 stories. The EIR findings indicate that the proposed building height revisions would not result in long-term diminishment of the Downtown appearance, but rather would promote a more visually organized and cohesive visual character and a more discernable and distinctive Downtown form, improving the quality of views of the Downtown area from primary travel corridors around and through the area, and from surrounding vantage points, including near views from adjacent residential neighborhoods and distant views from the western hills. Based on current CEQA criteria, no significant adverse aesthetic or visual resource impact has been identified and no mitigation is required.

(4) Cultural and Historic Resources Impacts. In general, the EIR concludes that the range and character of commercial and residential uses permitted by the Draft Precise Plan are unlikely to promote significant alteration of Downtown historic resources or their surroundings. EIR-identified exceptions to this general finding include possible adverse changes in the surroundings of: (a) three EIR-identified "historic resources"--the Main Library, City Hall, and the County Courthouse; and (b) two EIR-identified "potential historic resources"--a house at 127 Franklin Street and a house at 103 Wilson Street, that could potentially compromise the significance of these resources. The EIR concludes that, although Precise Plan-proposed "relational height limits" would help prevent future adverse impacts on these and other listed

historic or potential historic resources, the height limits as currently formulated could still allow potentially significant height-related impacts as future development occurs.

To mitigate these and any other EIR-identified potentially significant impacts on historic resources, the EIR states that for future individual development actions that may cause a "substantial adverse change" to an EIR-identified historic or potential historic resource, the City shall at that time prepare either an EIR or Mitigated Negative Declaration that includes mitigation for the potential change, or the applicant may conduct a historic resource survey meeting the requirements of Public Resources Code section 5024.1(g) to determine to City satisfaction whether the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that the property is not historically or culturally significant. The EIR explains that if the City determines at the CEQA-required Initial Study phase for such future development projects that their potential historic resource impacts are fully mitigated, then such developments may proceed based upon a Mitigated Negative Declaration; or, if the City determines that a historic resource impact would remain potentially significant and unavoidable, a focused EIR would be required.

(5) Transportation and Circulation Impacts. The EIR transportation impact analysis focuses largely on motor vehicle traffic and associated roadway system operation safety issues, as dictated by CEQA; however, the City's commitment to pedestrian priority objectives for the Downtown has been treated as an overriding consideration in formulating the mitigation findings of the Transportation and Circulation chapter.

The EIR includes analysis of 40 "study" intersections, three "study" freeway segments and four "study" freeway ramps identified as most likely to be affected by added traffic from Precise Plan-facilitated buildout. To comply with CEQA, peak hour operations at these study facilities are analyzed and described for the following scenarios:

- Existing conditions,
- Background conditions (existing conditions plus recently approved development),
- Maximum Intensity alternative buildout conditions (existing conditions, plus recently approved development, plus Maximum Intensity alternative),
- Moderate Intensity alternative buildout conditions (existing conditions, plus recently approved development, plus Moderate Intensity alternative),
- Future cumulative conditions without the project (a cumulative year 2020 analysis that includes pending local developments plus anticipated background growth), and
- Future cumulative conditions with the Precise Plan (a cumulative year 2020 analysis that includes pending local developments plus anticipated background growth, plus Precise Plan area buildout under the Maximum Intensity alternative).

The EIR finds that under the *existing conditions* scenario, all study intersections, freeway segments and freeway ramps are currently operating at acceptable operational levels ("levels of service") under City and C/CAG criteria and guidelines except:

- the El Camino Real/Whipple Avenue and Broadway/Woodside Road intersections which operate with excessive delay in the PM peak hour;

- US 101 southbound from SR 92 to the Santa Clara County line, which operates with excessive delay in the AM peak hour; and
- US 101 northbound from the Santa Clara County line to SR 92, which operates with excessive delay in the PM peak hour.

The EIR finds that buildout under the *Moderate Intensity* Precise Plan alternative would result in significant operational impacts (i.e., a significant change in operational levels) at the following roadway facilities:

- the Middlefield Road/Jefferson Avenue intersection (AM peak hour),
- the Broadway/Jefferson Avenue intersection (PM peak hour),
- the Broadway/Middlefield Road intersection (PM peak hour), and
- US 101 freeway southbound between Whipple Avenue and Marsh Road (AM and PM peak hours).

The EIR finds that buildout under the *Maximum Intensity* Precise Plan alternative would result in significant operational impacts on all of the roadway facilities listed above for the Moderate Intensity alternative, plus the following additional facilities:

- the Broadway/Woodside Road (SR 84) intersection (AM and PM peak hours), and
- the Middlefield Road/Woodside Road (SR 84) intersection (PM peak hour).

In addition, the EIR also finds that the Maximum Intensity buildout scenario contribution to future (2020) cumulative impacts would be significant at numerous local intersections and along southbound US 101 during both the AM and PM peak hours, based on City and C/CAG criteria and guidelines.

Where feasible, mitigations are identified in the EIR for most of these roadway system impacts; however, for a number of the EIR-identified intersection modification mitigations, the EIR indicates that the City may wish to avoid the modification in the interest of protecting the pedestrian environment, in which case the impact would become significant and unavoidable.

(6) Public Services, Utilities and Infrastructure Impacts. As part of the EIR preparation process, the City conducted an engineering study to evaluate the potential impacts of the Precise Plan Maximum and Moderate Intensity alternatives on the City's water, sewer, and storm drainage systems. Associated EIR findings are summarized below.

Water Supply: The EIR engineering study confirms that the Precise Plan Maximum and Moderate Intensity alternative buildout assumptions were adequately anticipated and accounted for in the City's 2005 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) and would not result in the need for new or expanded water supply entitlements. The City would have adequate water supply under normal (non-drought) water supply conditions to serve projected growth and development to 2030, including growth anticipated under the two Precise Plan buildout alternatives, using a combination of its existing San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) water supply

entitlement, its recycled water supply, and its established water conservation programs. The difference between the 2005 UWMP and current Maximum Intensity alternative buildout assumptions for the Precise Plan Area is less than significant (i.e., less than 40 residential units or less than one percent). As the UWMP is periodically updated (currently done at frequent intervals), it can be readily revised to reflect the water supply implications of the final adopted Precise Plan without needing to identify new or expanded supply entitlements. Based on current CEQA criteria, no significant adverse environmental impact associated with water supply adequacy has been identified and no mitigation is required.

Water Delivery System: The results of a water modeling analysis completed as part of the EIR engineering study verify that the existing system of water lines serving the Precise Plan area has adequate capacity to serve the Maximum and Moderate Intensity buildout alternatives for average day and maximum day conditions. Based on current CEQA criteria, no significant adverse environmental impact associated with water delivery system adequacy has been identified and no mitigation is required. However, the EIR does explain that many of the water pipes in the Downtown (and City as a whole) were constructed prior to the 1950s and are in need of replacement. The EIR notes that scheduling the replacement of old water pipes concurrently with frontage and roadway frontage improvements associated with Precise Plan-facilitated future development activities would reduce repaving and other frontage restoration costs and minimize construction impacts on nearby neighborhoods. The EIR also describes how, under the City's normal permitting procedures, individual future development projects in the Precise Plan area would be required to pay all applicable City water connection fees, and submit final individual project water system design specifications for approval by the City's Engineering and Construction Division.

Water Delivery Fire Flow Adequacy: The City's hydraulic model was used to analyze the effects of the Maximum and Moderate Intensity buildout alternatives on City water delivery system adequacy during fire flow conditions. The EIR concludes that under both Precise Plan buildout alternatives, sections of the existing water distribution piping at three separate locations within the Precise Plan area, totaling approximately 850 linear feet of 6-inch and 300 feet of 8-inch cast iron line, would need to be replaced with 12-inch PVC line. Therefore, to ensure adequate future fire flow in the Precise Plan area, the EIR recommends City establishment of an implementation plan, including schedule, responsible parties, and financing mechanism, for these needed pipeline improvements, with each individual development's fair share contribution to these water pipe upgrades calculated at the final permitting stage.

Wastewater Treatment and Transmission Capacity: The City already uses all of its allocated South Bayside System Authority (SBSA) wastewater treatment capacity, but possesses an option to purchase an additional 1.915 million gallons per day (mgd) of dry weather capacity. The EIR finds that the estimated average dry weather flow per day increase increment associated with the Maximum and Moderate Intensity alternatives (0.631 and 0.374 mgd, respectively) would be well within the City's option-to-purchase amount. However, the EIR also describes how the City has exceeded its peak wet weather flow capacity approximately nine times over the past 10 years due primarily to local transmission line inflow and infiltration during rain. The EIR concludes therefore that the Precise Plan Maximum and Moderate Intensity alternatives, in combination with anticipated cumulative development in the City, would exceed the City's wet weather flow capacity, representing a significant impact under CEQA. To mitigate this impact, the EIR stipulates that, as deemed necessary by the City Engineer, each future individual development's ultimate treatment capacity requirement shall be calculated at the final permitting stage and on that basis the applicant shall reimburse the City for costs associated

with that development's fair share of purchase of added treatment capacity from the SBSA and associated local transmission line capacity improvement needs.

Drainage System Impacts: The EIR concludes that, while residential and commercial development intensity in the Precise Plan area may change, there would be minimal difference between the two Precise Plan buildout alternatives and existing conditions in terms of impermeable surface area and associated stormwater runoff volumes and rates and, therefore, no added areawide stormwater system improvement needs are anticipated.

Long-Term Water Quality Effects: The EIR also indicates that the quality of stormwater runoff from the Precise Plan area could decline due to the anticipated overall increase in vehicular activity under both Precise Plan alternatives, but that existing long-term water pollution source control and/or pre-discharge treatment requirements imposed on individual development projects in accordance with existing City, County and Regional Water Quality Control Board regulations would provide adequate assurance that the resulting incremental degradation of water quality within downstream receiving waters would be less-than-significant.

In addition to the engineering study results summarized above, the EIR includes the following findings regarding potential Precise Plan effects on police, fire, emergency medical, parks and school services.

Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Services: Buildout of the Precise Plan area under the Maximum and Moderate Intensity alternatives would increase demands from Redwood City Police Department (RCPD) police services and Redwood City Fire Department (RCFD) fire protection and emergency medical services. The EIR indicates that these increases in emergency service demands may require additional RCPD and RCFD personnel and/or equipment, and possibly a new police sub-station and/or new fire station in or near the Precise Plan area in order to maintain acceptable service capabilities and response times. Such decisions (i.e., whether to plan for a new police sub-station or fire station) would be the responsibility of the City Council. Based on current CEQA criteria, the EIR finds that until such specific future emergency facilities expansion needs are identified by the City in terms of size, staffing, equipment, and location, assessment of associated environmental impacts would be highly speculative.

Parks and Recreation: The Downtown area currently includes a number of public spaces and plazas, including the Main Library and forecourt (Middlefield Road), City Hall entry plaza and City Center Plaza (next to City Hall), Courthouse Square (Broadway), John Roselli Memorial Garden, and Arguello Plaza. Numerous other Downtown locations include street furniture and other public amenities (e.g., Theatre Way, Broadway) or are used for public events (e.g., the farmers market, etc.). However, as used in the CEQA Guidelines and by the City for planning purposes, the terms "parks" and "parkland" refer to neighborhood parks and other municipal recreational facilities designated and maintained for active recreational purposes. The terms "parks" and "parkland" as used in this EIR do not include community features such as public spaces and plazas, which can provide desirable and useful gathering space, but do not provide adequate provision for active play (e.g., open turf, playground equipment, etc.).

The Precise Plan area currently does not contain any such public park or other recreational facilities other than Little River Park (an 0.08-acre landscaped area adjoining the Sequoia Station retail development) and Arguello Plaza. Residents of neighborhoods adjacent to the Downtown who spoke at the public scoping meeting for this EIR noted that the City is "under-

parked" and that more parks are needed in the Downtown area to address this existing deficiency and the needs of future residents.

The approximately 2,500 to 3,700 new residential units anticipated in the Precise Plan area over the next 15 to 20 years under the Moderate and Maximum Intensity Precise Plan alternatives, respectively, would increase the area population by an estimated 5,500 to 8,140 residents, with associated increases in the demand for convenient parks and recreation facilities.

In addition to the public spaces and plazas already existing in the Downtown, the Draft Precise Plan proposes several new public space improvements, including Depot Circle (near the Caltrain Station), Middlefield streetscape improvements (ornamental street trees and plantings, street furniture, festive lighting), the Main Library outdoor space project (integrating Roselli Park, the library, and environs for pedestrians), a Downtown Management Program that would establish City "care-taker" responsibilities for public spaces), Sequoia High School open space improvements to create a new public park, new public space improvements behind City Hall, and various streetscape improvements (e.g., along El Camino Real, etc.).

The City's Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department staff suggests that, in addition to these amenities and policies, the Precise Plan could also provide for new parkland in the form of public mini-parks and/or private, small, active rooftop recreation areas. Department staff also suggests that provision of larger new parks may also be appropriate in the vicinity, but for practical and feasibility purposes, such facilities would need to be located outside the Precise Plan area.

Redwood City does not have an adopted park standard or dedication or in-lieu fee requirement. The City is currently considering adoption of a General Plan Amendment that would establish an "Active Community Parkland Standard" of 3 acres per 1,000 residents and an associated in-lieu park fee for new residential development. If adopted, future residential development in the Precise Plan area would be required to comply with this standard.

Schools: Buildout of the Precise Plan area under the Maximum or Moderate Intensity buildout alternative would also result in an increased demand for public school services. Based on consultation with the Redwood City School District (RCSD), the EIR indicates that additional facilities would be needed to serve projected additional K-8 students generated by the two Precise Plan buildout alternatives (estimated at roughly 3,500 and 2,400 additional K-8 students for the Maximum and Moderate Intensity scenarios, respectively, based on RCSD-suggested enrollment multipliers for multi-family housing). The state-permitted method for addressing school enrollment increases in EIRs is limited to imposition of state-authorized development impact fees (Government Code section 65996). Therefore, under current state statute, payment of school district-required school impact fees (collected at building permit issuance), which are limited to periodically-adjusted state-specified maximums for residential and commercial development, would mitigate the Precise Plan alternative impacts on school services to the extent permitted.

(7) Air Quality Impacts. Precise Plan-facilitated growth would result in an increase in total vehicle miles traveled and associated air emissions. The proposed Precise Plan includes many features that would reduce vehicular trip generation associated with its permitted growth. In particular, the Plan would provide for more housing concentration near available local and regional transit and convenient to services and employment, and would provide relatively affordable housing to improve the citywide balance between housing and jobs. The Plan would

also enhance pedestrian and bicycle use in the Precise Plan area. Nevertheless, the proposed Precise Plan is expected to induce an overall increase in total growth within the Precise Plan area, and resultant additional vehicle trips to and from the area would generate significant long-term regional emissions increases, representing a *significant unavoidable impact* under CEQA.

(8) Biological Resources Impacts. Due to the generally low wildlife habitat value and limited extent of sensitive natural communities remaining in the Precise Plan area, the general impact of Precise Plan-facilitated development on vegetation and wildlife values in the area is identified in the EIR as less-than-significant. However, the EIR identifies a remote possibility that future individual Precise Plan-facilitated development projects, and application of related Redwood Creek landscaping standards listed in the Plan, may adversely affect small areas of existing jurisdictional wetland and salt marsh habitat, and associated special-status wildlife species, along the segment of Redwood Creek within the Precise Plan area. These possible effects represent potentially significant environmental impacts under CEQA; the EIR therefore identifies associated mitigation requirements, including jurisdictional protocol, wetland and special-status species surveys and, if warranted, habitat mitigation planning, prior to finalization of such future projects. The EIR also indicates that future development under both Precise Plan alternatives could result in the removal of heritage trees, as defined in the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance, and thus may be subject to Ordinance-specified tree removal permit application and review procedures.

(9) Noise Impacts. Demolition and construction activities facilitated by the Precise Plan would temporarily elevate noise levels and could generate substantial vibration at nearby residential and commercial "receptors" during future, individual, site-specific project construction periods, resulting in intermittent interference with existing residential and business activities and exceeding land use/noise level compatibility limits established in the City's General Plan *Noise Element*. The EIR therefore calls for City mitigation of such potential impacts by incorporating conditions in individual project demolition and construction agreements that stipulate a number of conventional construction-period noise abatement measures (preparation of a Construction Plan identifying a schedule and procedure for coordination of noise-generating construction activities and specific construction scheduling limitations, construction equipment muffler requirements, construction equipment location requirements, construction traffic routing requirements, temporary construction noise barrier requirements, and construction period noise disturbance coordinator requirements).

For future noise-sensitive land uses (multi-family residential) that the Precise Plan would permit in the vicinity of high existing and future ambient noise levels (e.g., near El Camino Real, Veteran's Boulevard or the Caltrain line), the EIR identifies a potentially significant long-term noise compatibility impact and, as standard mitigation for such effects, cites the State Building Code requirement for City-approved, site-specific noise studies (to identify appropriate noise reduction measures to be included in final project designs) for future Precise Plan-facilitated multi-family residential developments in these identified potential noise impact areas.

Potential Precise Plan-related changes in traffic noise levels were also calculated, based on EIR-projected changes in future traffic volumes, and determined to be below standard thresholds of significance.

(10) Hazards and Hazardous Materials Impacts. The EIR finds that required future development compliance in the Precise Plan area with established local, state and federal regulations regarding the storage and handling of hazardous waste would provide reasonable

assurance that associated health and safety effects would be less-than-significant. Similarly, the EIR finds that the potential for adverse health and safety impacts associated with Precise Plan-facilitated demolition and grading activities, including potential demolition activity exposure to asbestos-containing materials, lead, or PCBs, and construction activities near the identified contaminated soil and groundwater sites in the Precise Plan area (past underground storage tank locations, etc.), would be reduced to less-than-significant levels through required compliance with the established building survey, soil and groundwater investigation, and associated remediation requirements of the City, San Mateo County Office of Environmental Health, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and Regional Water Quality Control Board. The EIR also indicates that the Precise Plan-proposed increases in building height limitations would not penetrate the height restrictions (including Federal Aviation Regulations) described by C/CAG in the San Carlos Airport Land Use Plan.

(11) Additional Alternatives. In addition to the detailed evaluation throughout the EIR of the specific impacts of the Precise Plan Maximum Intensity and Moderate Intensity alternatives (Alternatives 1 and 2), the EIR identifies and generally describes the comparative impacts of three more alternatives to the proposed action to provide a basis for further understanding of the environmental effects of the Precise Plan and possible approaches to reducing identified impacts. The three additional alternatives include a "Reduced Height" alternative (Alternative 3); an "Existing Land Use Policy" alternative (Alternative 4); and a "No Project" ("No new Development") alternative (Alternative 5). The EIR provides a summary comparison of the potential environmental impacts of these five alternatives and concludes that, except for the "No Project" (No New Development) alternative, the Moderate Intensity project scenario would result in the least adverse combination of environmental impacts.

