

# CHAPTER I

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## INTRODUCTION

### A. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The project sponsor, Abbott Laboratories, proposes to construct a master-planned “West Coast Research Center” located at the terminus of Chesapeake Drive along Redwood City’s bayfront. The proposed project includes the preparation of a master plan for the development of research and development (R&D), office and administrative, manufacturing and warehousing uses on 17.74 acres, a greenbelt around the waterfront perimeter of the site, consisting of a linear waterfront park and other amenities, and would set aside land for the construction of a new Marine Science Institute facility. The City, serving as Lead Agency responsible for administering the environmental review for the proposed project, prepared an Initial Study that found that preparation of an environmental impact report (EIR) was needed for the proposed project because there was “substantial evidence that the project may have a significant effect on the environment.”

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that before a decision can be made to approve a project with potentially significant environmental effects, an EIR must be prepared that fully describes the environmental effects of the project. The EIR is a public information document for use by governmental agencies and the public to identify and evaluate potential environmental consequences of a proposed project, to recommend mitigation measures to lessen or eliminate adverse impacts, and to examine feasible alternatives to the project. The information contained in the EIR is reviewed and considered by the governing agency prior to the ultimate decision to approve, disapprove, or modify the proposed project.

CEQA requires that the Lead Agency (the City of Redwood City in this case) shall neither approve nor implement a project as proposed unless the project’s significant environmental effects have been reduced to a less-than-significant level, essentially “eliminating, avoiding, or substantially lessening” the expected impact. If the Lead Agency approves the project despite residual significant adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated to less-than-significant levels, the agency must state the reasons for its action in writing. This “Statement of Overriding Considerations” must be included in the record of project approval.

The City prepared an Initial Study that identified environmental issues that should be addressed in the EIR and environmental issues that could be excluded from further analysis. On March 4, 2003, the City sent a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to governmental agencies and organizations and persons interested in the project. The Initial Study and NOP are included as Appendix A. The NOP requested those agencies with regulatory authority over any aspect of the project to describe that authority and to identify the relevant environmental issues that should be addressed

in the EIR. The comment letters that were submitted in response to the Initial Study and NOP are included in Appendix B.

During the time the Draft EIR is available for public review, written comments on the adequacy of the Draft EIR may be submitted to the City. Responses to all substantive comments received on the adequacy of the Draft EIR and submitted within the specified review period will be included and responded to in the Final EIR. Prior to approval of the project, the City must certify the Final EIR and adopt a reporting and monitoring program for mitigation measures identified in this report in accordance with the requirements of Public Resources Code Section 21081.

## **B. THIS EIR**

This EIR provides the environmental information and evaluation necessary for the planning, site preparation, development, construction, operation, and maintenance of the Abbott Laboratories West Coast Research Center (the Project). The EIR has been prepared by the City of Redwood City as Lead Agency in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act. The EIR is intended to provide the information and environmental analysis necessary to assist public agency decision-makers in considering all of the approvals necessary to implement the proposed project.

The project sponsor had a number of studies prepared for the proposed project that the EIR has used, as appropriate. These include a Phase I Environmental Assessment (InteGreyted Consultants, LLC, 2000); Phase II Site Investigation Report (InteGreyted Consultants, LLC, 2000); and Abbott Laboratories Site Investigation (BKF Inc, 2003). Additional technical studies were prepared in support of this EIR, including a transportation report (Fehr & Peers Associates, 2003), and architectural resources investigation (Carey & Company, 2003). In conformance with CEQA, California *Public Resources Code*, Section 21000 *et. seq.*, this EIR provides objective information addressing the environmental consequences of the proposed project and possible means of reducing or avoiding its potentially significant impacts.

The guidelines for implementing CEQA help define the role of this EIR:

**15121 (a) Information Document.** An EIR is an informational document which will inform public agency decision-makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effect(s) of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project. The public agency shall consider the information in the EIR along with other information which may be presented to the agency.

**15151 Standards for Adequacy of an EIR.** An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision-makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.

Plans for constructing and occupying the project have proceeded to a degree sufficient to permit environmental analysis in conformance with CEQA. Accordingly, this EIR presents reasonable assumptions (as described in Chapter III, Project Description) about the overall types and levels of activities that the City could anticipate under the proposed project and describes their associated environmental impacts. Where necessary, the analyses are based on conservative assumptions that tend to overstate project impacts.

The *CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15382, define a significant effect on the environment as “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project...” Therefore, in identifying the significant impacts of the project, this EIR concentrates on its substantial physical effects and upon mitigation measures to avoid, reduce, or otherwise alleviate those effects. Although CEQA does not require that the EIR discuss, or that the lead agency (the City of Redwood City) impose, mitigation measures for nonphysical impacts that are less than significant, this EIR also evaluates and identifies mitigation measures for some nonphysical and less-than-significant impacts.

CEQA requires decision-makers to balance the benefits of a proposed project against its significant and unavoidable environmental impacts in determining whether to approve a project. If the decision-makers determine that the benefits of a proposed project outweigh its unavoidable adverse environmental effects, they may find the adverse affects to be nonetheless acceptable and approve the project.

## C. RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

CEQA requires that a reasonable range of alternatives be discussed in an EIR. This EIR identifies and analyzes such a reasonable range of alternatives; discusses the environmental effects of each alternative; and compares the environmental effects of each alternative with the environmental setting, with the effects of the project and each other alternative; and addresses the relationship of each alternative to the project sponsor’s objectives. The determinations of the City concerning the feasibility, acceptance, or rejection of each and all alternatives considered in this EIR will be addressed and resolved in the City’s findings, when it considers approval of the project, as required by CEQA. The alternatives consist of the following:

- Alternative 1: No Project Alternative, including two sub-alternatives, namely a *No Project—No Subsequent Development Alternative* and a *No Project—Reasonably Foreseeable Development Alternative*.
- Alternative 2: *Industrial Park Zoning District Alternative* based on development in accordance with the requirements of the IP Zoning District, which would allow for construction of up to 309,186 sf of R&D, manufacturing, office and warehousing uses on the project site in buildings with a maximum height of 50 feet.
- Alternative 3: The *Reduced Height Alternative*, based on the same development intensity as proposed by the preferred project, however in buildings which would conform to the Industrial-Restricted Zoning District’s 75-foot height limit.
- Alternative 4: The *Split-Site Alternative*, which would include development of the project site for a new 200,000-square foot Perclose facility (similar to Phase 1 of the proposed

project) with the remaining site area developed with surface parking uses. The remaining project components would be located off site.

## D. USE OF THE EIR

The EIR provides the environmental information and evaluation necessary for the planning, construction, operation and maintenance of the project. The EIR provides the CEQA compliance documentation upon which the City's consideration of, and action on, all applicable land use permits and other approvals (collectively, "approvals") may be based. These include all those approvals set forth in this EIR, as well as any additional approvals that may be necessary or useful to such planning, construction, operation and maintenance (e.g., any use permits, grading permits, building permits, certificates of occupancy and other development-related approvals).

## E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation in the planning and environmental review processes is strongly encouraged. Opportunities will be provided for the public to present comments and concerns regarding the CEQA and planning process through a public review and comment period and public hearings or meetings before the City Planning Commission, held explicitly for the purpose of commenting on the preparation and content of the EIR. Written public comments may be submitted to the City at any time during the public review and comment period, and written and spoken comments may be presented at public hearings.

## F. ORGANIZATION OF THE DRAFT EIR

This Draft EIR is organized so as to allow the reader to quickly and logically review a summary of the analysis, review the recommended mitigation measures, and identify the residual environmental impacts after mitigation, if any. Those readers who wish to read the Draft EIR in greater detail are directed to the main body of the document. This Draft EIR has been organized into the following sections.

**Chapter I, Introduction:** The Introduction provides an overview that describes the intended use and organization of the EIR, and sets forth some of the assumptions critical to the environmental analysis.

**Chapter II, Summary:** The Summary summarizes the EIR by providing an overview of the project, the environmental impacts that would result from the project, the mitigation measures identified to reduce or eliminate these impacts, and the alternatives to the project.

**Chapter III, Project Description:** The Project Description discusses the project objectives, provides background data on the proposed project location, describes the operational and physical characteristics of the proposed project, and identifies required project approvals.

**Chapter IV, Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation:** This chapter describes the existing setting, discusses the environmental impacts of the project, describes cumulative impacts

through 2010, and identifies mitigation measures for the environmental impacts examined in the EIR. The issues addressed in the EIR are Land Use and Planning Consistency; Geology, Soils and Seismic Safety; Hydrology and Water Quality; Traffic, Transportation, Circulation and Parking; Air Quality; Noise; Aesthetics and Visual Quality; Biological Resources; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Public Services; Cultural Resources; Utilities and Service Systems; and Population, Jobs, and Housing. Within each impact section contained in Chapter IV of this EIR, potential impacts are identified in bold type. Following the discussion of each stated impact, feasible measures that could avoid, alleviate or lessen the severity of identified impacts are identified. If mitigation measures could in themselves generate significant impacts, these impacts are also identified. Where mitigation measures are proposed as part of the project, they are assumed for purposes of analysis to be included in the project description, unless otherwise indicated.

**Chapter V, Alternatives:** This chapter presents a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project, provides discussion of the environmental impacts associated with each alternative, compares the relative impacts of each alternative to those of the project and the other alternatives, and discusses the relationship of the alternatives to the project sponsor's objectives.

**Chapter VI, Impact Overview:** This chapter presents discussions of growth inducement, and summarizes discussions of cumulative impacts, unavoidable significant impacts, and effects found not to be significant.

**Chapter VII, Report Preparation:** This chapter lists report preparers and identifies persons and organizations consulted during report preparation (if any).

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## REFERENCES – Introduction

Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State of California, *Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act*, as amended.