
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 EIR PURPOSE AND INTENDED USE

This environmental impact report (EIR) describes the environmental implications of the proposed Bayside Gardens project. The approximately 14.13-acre project site is located at 557 East Bayshore Road at the northern edge of the developed portion of Redwood City, on the San Francisco Bay side of U.S. Highway 101 (Bayshore Freeway).

The proposed development program includes approximately 600 rental apartments, associated recreational facilities (e.g., recreational center, two swimming pools, sports court, and play lawns), approximately 8,300 square feet of convenience retail floor area fronting on East Bayshore Road, and improvements to an on-site public trail parallel to the adjacent Smith Slough tidal channel and path (a segment of the Bay Trail), with vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian access to the project, including the on-site trail and adjacent parallel off-site trail, from East Bayshore Road. It is anticipated that project development would be phased over approximately four years.

The City of Redwood City (the City) is the Lead Agency¹ for all environmental documentation and procedural requirements associated with the Bayside Gardens project. This EIR has been prepared by the City in keeping with state environmental documentation requirements set forth in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The report is intended to inform City decision-makers, other responsible agencies, and the general public of the proposed project and of the environmental consequences of its approval. The scope of this EIR is intentionally limited to evaluation and discussion of the project's environmental implications. The EIR is not intended to address the merits of the project, or the economic or social impacts of the project or alternatives, nor is the EIR intended to be a planning document for use in determining allocation of infrastructure or public services.

The CEQA Guidelines stipulate that an EIR is intended to serve as a public information and disclosure document identifying those environmental impacts associated with the proposed project that are expected to be significant, and describing mitigation measures and alternatives that could minimize or eliminate these significant adverse impacts.² Such impacts and

¹The CEQA Guidelines (Sections 15000-15387, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3) define the "Lead Agency" as the public agency that has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project.

²CEQA Guidelines section 15149(b).

mitigation needs are discussed in this EIR to the level of detail necessary to allow reasoned decisions about the project and conditions of project approval. This report also describes and evaluates a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project.

Implementation of the project as currently proposed would require City approval of a General Plan Amendment (GPA) and Zoning Map Amendment, among other entitlements, in order to permit residential uses on the project site, and at a density (approximately 42.5 units per gross acre) above the current Redwood City Strategic General Plan maximum allowable residential density of 40 dwelling units per net acre.

As used in this EIR, the terms "Bayside Gardens project" and "project" refer to all aspects of the current development plan proposal, including the potential General Plan Amendment and Zoning Map Amendment approvals, plus all other City approvals, entitlements, and permits that may be required to allow development of the project. As a result of the information in this EIR, the Redwood City City Council may act to approve or deny these various actions, and/or to establish associated requirements or conditions on project design, construction, and operation that it deems warranted in order to mitigate identified project impacts on the environment.

As the Lead Agency, the City also intends for this EIR to serve as the CEQA-required environmental documentation for consideration of this project by other Responsible Agencies¹ and Trustee Agencies,² potentially including, but not limited to, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County in both its designated role as the County's Congestion Management Agency and Airport Land Use Commission.

1.2 EIR SCOPE--SIGNIFICANT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

As required by the state CEQA Guidelines, the scope of this EIR includes all environmental issues to be resolved and all areas of environmental controversy known to the Lead Agency (the City), including those issues and concerns identified as possibly significant by the City in its preliminary environmental review (Initial Study³) of the project; and by other agencies, organizations, and individuals in response to the City's Notice of Preparation (dated July 16,

¹Under the CEQA Guidelines, the term "Responsible Agency" includes all public agencies, other than the Lead Agency, which have discretionary approval power over aspects of the project for which the Lead Agency has prepared an EIR.

²Under the CEQA Guidelines, the term "Trustee Agency" means a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by the project which are held in trust by the people of California.

³The City's Initial Study for the Bayside Gardens project is included in appendix 21.1 of this EIR.

2003).¹ These known areas of environmental controversy and environmental issues to be resolved include:

1. the **land use** implications of the project, including local land use relationships, any associated potential incompatibilities (impacts on or due to adjoining uses), and the relationship and consistency of the project with Redwood City Strategic General Plan land use policies and other pertinent jurisdictional land use policies;
2. the **aesthetic** implications of the project, including project visual relationships to adjacent areas, impacts on views from U.S. 101, compliance with related Redwood City Strategic General Plan policies and design guidelines, and warranted mitigations in the form of design refinements, design standards, common treatments to visually unify the area, etc.;
3. the potential **population and housing** effects of the proposed project, including its responsiveness to and impacts on future housing needs in Redwood City, and its effects on the localized and citywide jobs/housing balance;
4. the **transportation and circulation** implications of the project, including (a) the effects of the project, and the project in combination with anticipated cumulative surrounding buildout, on future roadway traffic volumes, capacities, and levels of service; (b) the associated effects on the planned Blomquist Street Extension; (c) anticipated impacts on, and future demands for, alternative Bayfront Area transportation modes, including local transit, pedestrian, and bicycle provisions (i.e., coordinated with current *Bayfront Study* findings); and (d) an appropriate fair-share mitigation approach for buildout-related roadway and other transportation improvements;
5. the **biological resources** implications of the project, with emphasis on potential effects on nearby Smith Slough tidal channel habitats, and on related special-status plant and animal species, associated state and/or federal jurisdictional agency requirements, and warranted mitigation measures, including those required by the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) for the northern 50-foot-wide edge of the project site within BCDC jurisdiction;
6. the potential **hydrology and water quality** effects of the project, including impacts of any associated peak stormwater runoff changes on the local storm drainage collection and pumping system, relationships to local flooding conditions, and effects on Smith Slough water quality due to construction activities and long-term increases in land use intensity;
7. the **infrastructure and public services** implications of the project, including demands for and effects on water supply (based on a project-specific *Water Supply Assessment* prepared by

¹The Notice of Preparation (NOP) is a CEQA-required brief notice sent by the Lead Agency to notify the Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and potentially involved federal agencies that the Lead Agency plans to prepare an EIR for the project, and solicits guidance regarding EIR scope and content. The City's NOP for the Bayside Gardens project is included in appendix 21.1 of this EIR.

City Public Works Services Department staff), sewer, police, fire, emergency medical, school, parks and recreation (including the San Francisco Bay Trail), solid waste disposal, and child care services;

8. the general **soils and geology** implications of the project, including on-site, Bay mud related potentials for strong ground shaking, liquefaction, and differential settlement; and associated project design implications (foundation needs, etc.);

9. the potential **public health and safety** implications of the project, including possible relationships to existing contaminated soils, groundwater conditions, and/or other hazardous materials associated with existing and former industrial and commercial uses in the project vicinity, and associated remediation protocols;

10. the **noise** implications of the project, including the compatibility of the proposed residential land uses with the projected future U.S. 101, East Bayshore Road, and overhead aircraft noise environment, and the potential effects of project buildout on traffic noise levels along sensitive local routes;

11. the **cultural and historic resources** implications of the project, including its relationship to, and potential impacts on, Bayfront area cultural artifacts; and

12. the anticipated local and regional **air quality** impacts of the project, including the potential effects of increased long-term automobile emissions and short-term construction-related emissions.

1.3 "SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS" AND OTHER KEY EIR TERMINOLOGY

This EIR identifies those adverse environmental impacts that are expected to be "significant," and corresponding mitigation measures warranted to eliminate or reduce those impacts to "less-than-significant" levels. Where it is determined in this report that a particular impact cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant level, the EIR identifies that impact as "unavoidable." Section 18.2 of the EIR, Significant Unavoidable Impacts, includes a summary list of all significant project impacts identified as "unavoidable." Identified significant impacts that are not listed as "unavoidable" in section 18.2 have been determined to be capable of mitigation to a less-than-significant level by implementation of the mitigation measure(s) identified in this EIR.

These particular EIR terms ("significant," "unavoidable," "mitigation") and other key CEQA terminology used in this EIR are defined in the box on the next page.

DEFINITIONS OF KEY EIR TERMINOLOGY

Significant/Potentially Significant Impact	"Significant effect on the environment" means 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 and aesthetic significance. (CEQA Guidelines, section 15382.) "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." (CEQA Guidelines, section 15382.)
Significant Cumulative Impact	"Cumulative impacts" are defined as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts." (CEQA Guidelines, section 15355.)
Significant Unavoidable Impact	"Significant unavoidable impacts" are defined as those significant adverse environmental impacts for which either no mitigation or only partial mitigation is feasible. If the project is to be approved without imposing an alternative design, the Lead Agency (the City) must include in the record of the project approval a written statement of the specific reasons to support its action--i.e., a "statement of overriding considerations." (CEQA Guidelines, sections 15126.2(b) and 15093(b).)
Significance Criteria	The criteria used in this EIR to determine whether an impact is or is not " <i>significant</i> " are based on (a) CEQA-stipulated "mandatory findings of significance"--i.e., where any of the specific conditions occur under which the Legislature and the Secretary of Resources have determined to constitute a potentially significant effect on the environment, which are listed in CEQA Guidelines section 15065; (b) the relationship of the project effect to the adopted policies, ordinances and standards of the City and of responsible agencies; and/or (c) commonly accepted practice and the professional judgment of the EIR authors and City staff.
Mitigation Measures	For each significant impact, the EIR must identify a specific "mitigation" measure or set of measures capable of " <i>(a) avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action; (b) minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation; (c) rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the impacted environment; (d) reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; or (e) compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.</i> " (CEQA Guidelines, section 15370.)

SOURCE: Wagstaff and Associates, 2003.

1.4 REPORT ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT

The impact and mitigation information in this EIR is generally organized in chapters under the 12 environmental headings listed in section 1.2 above (land use; visual factors; population and housing; transportation and circulation; etc.). Each environmental chapter includes sections describing the following for that issue:

- (a) The environmental setting;
- (b) Pertinent plans and policies;
- (c) Impacts anticipated due to the proposed project; and
- (d) Measures recommended to mitigate anticipated significant adverse impacts.

In addition, this report includes a chapter describing and comparing various **alternatives to the proposed project** (chapter 17); a chapter summarizing the EIR information in terms of various **CEQA-required assessment considerations**, including project growth-inducing impacts, significant unavoidable impacts, irreversible environmental changes, cumulative impacts, and effects found not to be significant (chapter 18); and a chapter outlining the City's **mitigation monitoring** intentions in keeping with CEQA section 21081.6 (chapter 19).