



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT  
COMMONWEALTH: BUILDING 3 PROJECT  
CITY OF MENLO PARK**

**Date:** May 24, 2019

<b>To:</b>	State Clearinghouse	<b>From:</b>	Tom Smith
	State Responsible Agencies		Senior Planner
	State Trustee Agencies		City of Menlo Park
	Other Public Agencies		701 Laurel Street
	Interested Organizations		Menlo Park, CA 94025

**Subject:** **Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the Initial Study and Environmental Impact Report for the Commonwealth: Building 3 Project**

**Lead Agency:** City of Menlo Park, Planning Division

**Project Title:** Commonwealth: Building 3 Project

**Project Area:** City of Menlo Park

Notice is hereby given that the City of Menlo Park (City) will be the lead agency and will prepare a focused environmental impact report (EIR) for the Commonwealth: Building 3 (Project). An Initial Study has been prepared along with this Notice of Preparation (NOP), which scopes out several environmental topics for further review. The focused EIR will address potential physical environmental effects of the Project that have not been scoped out, as outlined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City is requesting comments on the scope and content of this focused EIR.

A scoping session will be held as part of the Planning Commission meeting on **June 3, 2019, at 7:00 p.m.** at the Menlo Park City Council Chambers, located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025. The scoping session, which is part of the focused EIR scoping process, is the time when the City solicits input from the public and agencies on specific topics they believe should be addressed in the environmental analysis.

Written comments on the scope of the focused EIR may also be sent to:

**Tom Smith, Senior Planner**  
**City of Menlo Park**  
**Community Development Department, Planning Division**  
**701 Laurel Street**  
**Menlo Park, CA 94025**  
**tasmith@menlopark.org**  
**Phone: 650.330.6730**

Comments on the NOP are due no later than the close of the NOP review period (5:00 p.m. on Friday, **June 28, 2019**). Note that the typical 30-day review period has been extended to account for the Memorial Day holiday. However, we would appreciate your response at the earliest possible date. Please send your written comments to Tom Smith at the address shown above or by email to [tasmith@menlopark.org](mailto:tasmith@menlopark.org) with "Commonwealth: Building 3 EIR" as the subject. Public agencies that provide comments are asked to include a contact person for the agency.

The Initial Study is available online at: <https://www.menlopark.org/1552/CEQA-documents>. Hardcopies are also available for review at:

- Menlo Park Library (800 Alma Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025)
- Belle Haven Branch Library (413 Ivy Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025)
- Community Development Department, Civic Center (701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025)

**PROJECT LOCATION AND EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The Project site is located north of US 101 in the City of Menlo Park (as shown in Figure 1). The Project site, which is composed of the Commonwealth Site and the Jefferson Site, is bounded by Jefferson Drive and office buildings to the north, the currently inactive Dumbarton Rail Corridor to the southeast, US 101 to the south, and an Exponent building to the west. Office, life science, and research and development uses are located immediately adjacent to the Project site in all directions. Neighborhoods in Menlo Park are south (across the Dumbarton Rail Corridor and US 101) of the Project site. To the southeast, across the Dumbarton Rail Corridor, are recreation and public facilities uses associated with Kelly Park and the Onetta Harris Community Center.

The Commonwealth Corporate Center, which is the Project site, totals approximately 13.3 acres (578,500 square feet [sf]) with an existing floor area ratio (FAR) of 45 percent. The Commonwealth Site includes assessor's parcel numbers (APNs) 055-243-300, 055-243-310, and a portion of 055-243-999. The four-story Buildings 1 and 2, both located on the Commonwealth Site, were constructed in 2015. Each building is approximately 67 feet tall, with an area of approximately 129,960 gross square feet (gsf) and a footprint of approximately 34,540 gsf. Together, the two buildings have a total floor area of approximately 259,920 gsf. Buildings 1 and 2 are surrounded by surface parking, landscaping, pedestrian paths, and water features. A courtyard with café tables and chairs is located between the two buildings; a bocce court and wood deck is north of Building 2. The Commonwealth Site also includes approximately 779 surface parking spaces. The 1.2-acre Jefferson Site, which includes a portion of APN 055-243-999, is north of the Commonwealth Site. The Jefferson Site is currently occupied by a surface parking lot with approximately 87 parking spaces and landscaping.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The Sobrato Organization (Project Sponsor) is proposing to construct an approximately 249,500-gsf office building (Building 3) and an approximately 324,000 gsf parking structure as part of the Commonwealth: Building 3 Project (Project). Building 3 and the parking structure would replace most of the existing surface parking lot. Building 3 would be north of existing Buildings 1 and 2, in the northern portion of the Commonwealth Site, and would have a maximum height of 69 feet (four stories), as measured to the top of the parapet. Building 3 would be surrounded by surface parking, the proposed parking structure, landscaping, and pedestrian paths. Patios with café tables and chairs would be situated in and around Building 3, providing a social space for the Project. When combined with the existing buildings at the Project site, the Project would result in three office buildings with a combined floor area of approximately 509,420 gsf and a FAR of 88 percent.

The Project Sponsor would also construct an approximately 324,000 gsf parking structure east of Buildings 2 and 3 at the Commonwealth Site, with access provided via an internal street east of the two buildings. The proposed parking structure would have four levels and a maximum height of 48 feet. The parking structure would be east of Building 3 in the eastern portion of the Commonwealth Site. In total, 1,061 parking spaces would be provided in the four-story parking structure.

In addition to the proposed Building 3 and parking structure at the Commonwealth Site, the Jefferson Site would be converted from an existing surface parking lot to a community park (Jefferson Park) that would be privately owned but publicly accessible. Jefferson Park would be accessible via paseo connections to Jefferson Drive and the Commonwealth site. This “parklet” would be roughly 32,000 square feet (0.73 acre) in size, including a small parking lot. The final design of this park would be determined through a process involving City and community feedback. Potential features could include a multi-use sports court, a flexible lawn area for games and other activities, and an area with accent pavers that would provide space for games and a mix of lounge and dining seating. Additional features could include a playground or other amenities. Parking spaces within the park would be separated and accented by shade trees, grasses, shrubs, and ground cover. The intent is for the park to be used by the adjacent TIDE Academy for physical education classes and parking, with spaces for approximately 20 to 24 staff members. During non-school hours, the park and parking would be available to the public.

This Project is proposing bonus level development, although the proposed community amenity has not yet been identified.

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

- Conditional Development Permit Amendment
- Architectural Control
- Below-Market-Rate Housing Agreement
- Environmental Review

In addition, as part of the Project review process conducted by the City, a Fiscal Impact Analysis will be prepared as well as an appraisal to identify the necessary value of the community amenity.

**RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES:** The agencies listed below are expected to review the draft focused EIR to evaluate the Project:

- Bay Area Air Quality Management District
- California Department of Transportation
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board/San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program
- San Mateo County Transportation Authority
- Menlo Park Fire Protection District
- San Mateo County Environmental Health Division
- West Bay Sanitary District
- Native American Heritage Commission

**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 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 EIR was prepared as a program EIR, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. Section 15168(c)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines provides that if a later activity that would have effects that were not examined in the program EIR, a new initial study would need to be prepared. Section 15168(d) of the CEQA Guidelines provides information for simplifying the preparation of environmental documents by incorporating by reference analyses and discussions, as well as mitigation measures.

An Initial Study for the Project, which is available for review online, at the City libraries, and at the Community Development Department (as listed above), has been prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the Project and determine what level of additional environmental review is appropriate. In accordance with the requirements outlined in Section 15168(c) of the CEQA Guidelines, the Initial Study has been prepared to disclose the relevant impacts and mitigation measures covered in the ConnectMenlo EIR and discuss whether the Project is within the parameters of the ConnectMenlo EIR. Based on the findings in the Initial Study, a focused EIR will be prepared for impacts that need further discussion and/or mitigation beyond that provided in the ConnectMenlo EIR. The focused EIR for the Project will be prepared and processed in accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines.

**PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:** Based on the conclusions in the Initial Study, the following topics will be scoped out of the EIR: agriculture, aesthetics, biological resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use, mineral resources, public services, and recreation. Therefore, the focused EIR will analyze whether the Project would have a significant environmental impact in the following areas:

- Air quality
- Cultural resources
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Noise
- Population and housing
- Transportation and traffic
- Tribal cultural resources
- Utilities (water supply)

**ALTERNATIVES:** Based on the significance conclusions determined in the focused EIR, alternatives to the Project will be analyzed to reduce identified impacts. Section 15126.6(e) of the CEQA Guidelines requires the evaluation of a No-Project Alternative. Other alternatives may be considered during preparation of the EIR and will comply with the CEQA Guidelines, which call for a “range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project.” The focused EIR will also analyze a Reduced Intensity Alternative, along with any other feasible alternatives that are proposed during the scoping process.

**EIR PROCESS:** Following the close of the NOP comment period, a draft focused EIR will be prepared that will consider all NOP comments. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15105(a), the draft focused EIR will be released for public review and comment for a required 45-day review period. Following the close of the 45-day public review period, the City will prepare a final EIR, which will include responses to all substantive comments received on the draft focused EIR. The draft focused EIR and final EIR will be considered by the Planning Commission and City Council in making the decision to certify the EIR and approve or deny the Project.



Tom Smith, Senior Planner  
City of Menlo Park

May 24, 2019

Date



Figure 1  
Project Location

