

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

A notice, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended (Public Resources Code 21,000, et sec.) that the following project may have a significant effect on the environment.

File Number	APN(s)		Date		
Not applicable	Citywide		09/29/2022		
Project Name		Project Type	Project Type		
City of Palo Alto 2023-2031 Housing Element Update		Comprehensive Plan Element Update			
Owner		Project Sponsor			
Not applicable		City of Palo Alto	City of Palo Alto		

Project Location

The project, which is an update to the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan, is applicable to the entire City of Palo Alto (citywide). Palo Alto is located in Santa Clara County in the San Francisco Bay Area approximately 35 miles south of San Francisco and 14 miles north of San Jose. The City encompasses an area of approximately 26 square miles, nearly half of which is designated as parks, open space, and baylands. Pursuant to Section 15087(c)(6) of the CEQA Guidelines, there are multiple sites on a hazardous waste list enumerated under Section 65962.5 of the Government Code within the city.

Project Description

The proposed project consists of a complete update to the Housing Element and related edits to the City's Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element and Palo Alto Municipal Code. The Housing Element is one of the seven state-mandated elements of the local Comprehensive Plan and is required to be updated every eight years. The City of Palo Alto is preparing the 2023-2031 Housing Element Update to comply with the legal mandate that requires each local government to identify adequate sites for housing to meet the existing and projected housing needs for varying income-levels in the community. It is intended to provide the city with a comprehensive strategy for promoting the production of safe, decent and affordable housing, and affirmatively furthering fair housing during the housing cycle. The Housing Element Update establishes goals, policies, and actions to address the existing and projected housing needs in Palo Alto.

The goals, policies, and actions in the Housing Element are required to meet Palo Alto's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). Palo Alto's latest RHNA calls for 6,086 new housing units, including 2,452 new units for residents in the low-, very low-, and extremely low-income categories. The City must demonstrate to the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) that the City's Housing Element has identified adequate land capacity and implementing policies to accommodate its RHNA. In addition, HCD recommends that cities identify a "buffer" of additional units. The City chose to have a buffer of 10 percent above its RHNA. Thus, overall, the City's zoning and other land use regulations must accommodate at least 6,695 new units during the 8-year planning period. By comparison, the 2017 Comprehensive Plan anticipated—and the Comprehensive Plan Environmental Impact Report evaluated—the addition of 3,545 to 4,420 dwelling units between 2015 and 2030.

To identify the housing sites to be included in the Housing Element, the City will identify suitable and available housing sites and their capacity, screen for vacant and underutilized parcels, evaluate and analyze sites, and calculate potential buildout. Among the several criteria for site selection are proximity to transit, location in high resource areas, environmental considerations such as historic resources and hazards, development potential of sites, and community input.

Purpose of Notice

The City of Palo Alto will be the lead agency and will prepare a Supplement to the 2030 Comprehensive Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Housing Element Update. This Notice of Preparation is sent pursuant to Section 15082 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines to announce the initiation of the Supplemental EIR process and to solicit comments from responsible and trustee agencies and interested parties concerning the scope of issues to be addressed in the Supplemental EIR. The Draft Supplemental EIR will address the potential physical and environmental effects of the proposed project in accordance with CEQA. There will be opportunities to comment on the Housing Element itself over the next several months.

Public Hearing

The City of Palo Alto, in its role as Lead Agency, will conduct a virtual scoping meeting **on Thursday, October 13, 2022**. The meeting will start at 6:00 PM and can be accessed online. Please click the link below to join the zoom webinar: https://cityofpaloalto.zoom.us/j/87375857607. The meeting agenda and information to join the virtual meeting will be posted to the Houisng Element Update website one week prior to the hearing. Interested parties should check the City's website to confirm the meeting time, date, and access details: https://paloaltohousingelement.com/

Supplemental EIR Comment Period: Begins: 09/30/2022 Ends: 10/31/2022

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than 30 days after receipt of this notice. Please focus your comments on the project's potential environmental impacts and recommendations for methods of avoiding, reducing, or otherwise mitigating those impacts. If you are a governmental agency with discretionary authority over initial or subsequent aspects of this project, describe that authority and provide comments regarding potential environmental effects that are germane to your agency's area of responsibility. We also respectfully request the name of a contact person for your agency. Written comments should be addressed to:

Tim Wong, Senior Planner City of Palo Alto 250 Hamilton Avenue, 5th Fl Palo Alto, CA 94301 heupdate@cityofpaloalto.org

Additional information on this project may be reviewed online at https://paloaltohousingelement.com/ or by contacting Tim Wong at (650) 329-2493 or heupdate@cityofpaloalto.org

Responsible Agencies that received a copy of this document:

No responsible agencies have been identified for this project.

Potential Environmental Effects:

Adoption of the proposed Housing Element Update would not approve any physical development (e.g., construction of housing or infrastructure). However, the Supplemental EIR will assume that such actions are reasonably foreseeable future outcomes of the Housing Element Update. As such, the Supplemental EIR will evaluate the potential physical environmental impacts that could result from future actions for implementing the policies proposed under the Housing Element Update at a programmatic level, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. The topical areas that will be addressed in the Supplemental EIR are: Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Energy, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, Land Use and Planning, Population and Housing, Public Services and Recreation, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Utilities and Service Systems. The Draft Supplemental EIR will also examine a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project, including the CEQAmandated No Project Alternative and other potential alternatives that may be capable of reducing or avoiding potential environmental effects while meeting most of the basic objectives of the project. In addition, the Supplemental EIR will address cumulative impacts, growth inducing impacts, and other issues required by CEQA.

Prepared by:			
	Tim Wong Print Name	Tim Wong Signature	September 26, 2022 Date