

## **NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP) OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT & SCOPING SESSION FOR NORTH FAIR OAKS REZONING AND GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT PROJECT**

**Date:** April 27, 2022

The County of San Mateo is preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the North Fair Oaks Rezoning and General Plan Amendment Project (“project”), as identified below, and is requesting comments on the scope and content of the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR will address the potential physical and environmental effects of the project for each of the environmental topics outlined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The County of San Mateo is the Lead Agency for the project. This notice is being sent to the California State Clearinghouse, San Mateo County Clerk, adjacent cities, potential responsible agencies, and other interested parties. Responsible agencies are those public agencies, in addition to the County of San Mateo, that may have a role in approving or carrying out the project. When the Draft EIR is published, a Notice of Availability of a Draft EIR will be sent to Responsible Agencies, other public agencies, and interested parties and individuals who have indicated that they would like to review the Draft EIR.

Responses to this NOP and any questions or comments should be directed in writing to:

**Will Gibson, Planner III, Planning & Building Department, 455 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063; or [wgibson@smcgov.org](mailto:wgibson@smcgov.org).**

Comments on the NOP must be received on or before May 25, 2022. In addition, comments may be provided at the EIR Scoping Meeting (see below). Comments should focus on possible impacts on the physical environment, ways in which potential adverse effects might be minimized, and alternatives to the proposed project.

**EIR PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING:** The County of San Mateo Planning Commission will conduct a public scoping session when it meets on May 11, 2022, starting at 9:00 am. This meeting will be held virtually on Zoom. For meeting agenda and updates, including the Zoom link for the meeting, visit <http://planning.smcgov.org/planning-commission>.

### **PROJECT TITLE:**

North Fair Oaks Rezoning and General Plan Amendment Project

**PROJECT LOCATION:** The project area is located within North Fair Oaks, an unincorporated community in San Mateo County, California, which is situated on the San Francisco Peninsula between the cities of Redwood City, Atherton, and Menlo Park (see Project Location Map and

Project Vicinity Map, attached). The project area is comprised of two non-contiguous subareas that are separated by a railroad right-of-way owned by Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board and used for freight service and Caltrain passenger rail. Of the two subareas, the northern subarea is comprised of parcels along and in the vicinity of Middlefield Road and Edison Way (see Project Study Area map, attached). The southern subarea is comprised of parcels along and in the vicinity of El Camino Real (State Highway 82) and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** County of San Mateo

**EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The project area encompasses approximately 78 acres of land. The project area contains a mix of commercial uses, including auto services, industrial, retail, restaurants, a motel, and office buildings; and residential uses, including multi-family and single-family buildings (see Existing Land Use map, attached). Public and quasi-public uses include a public parking lot, a church, and right-of-way for the Hetch Hetchy aqueduct, which supplies water to San Francisco and other communities. The project area is generally surrounded by residential neighborhoods with a mix of single-family and small multiplex buildings, except for commercial uses along a portion of El Camino Real and west of the project area.

Land use intensity and building conditions vary in the project area. Roughly two-thirds of the project area has development potential by virtue of a parcel having a relatively low floor area ratio (the ratio of total building floor area to site area) and/or relatively low building value to land value, as compared with established development trends. Three parcels in the project area are present on one of the lists of hazardous waste sites enumerated under Section 95962.5 of the Government Code.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND:** In 2011, the County of San Mateo adopted the North Fair Oaks Community Plan, which promotes infill development along the commercial and transportation corridors that comprise most of the project area, where parcels presently have relatively low intensity and can be converted to more urban uses over time, to help revitalize North Fair Oaks, produce more housing, and confer other community benefits.

To implement the Community Plan, the County subsequently adopted mixed-use designations, standards, and procedures as part of its Zoning Regulations. Since that time, users of the adopted zoning have experienced difficulties with the application and administration of the mixed-use zoning standards. Additionally, the State of California has enacted new laws that require that zoning that regulates the production of multifamily housing provide objective development standards and streamlined permitting and approval processes that can be applied ministerially to encourage housing production. Furthermore, the County of San Mateo, like jurisdictions throughout the region and the state, is experiencing increasing demand for housing, and consequent housing availability and affordability challenges, and foresees the potential inability to provide sufficient housing for unincorporated County residents within the densities allowed by current zoning regulations, particularly in areas in proximity to transit.

Goals for the project include:

1. Adopt more effective zoning by revising provisions that are difficult to administer and/or implement, replacing provisions necessitating subjective interpretation with objective standards, refining development application and review procedures, and incorporating professional practices that better promote Community Plan policies.
2. Increase capacity for housing in the project area by modifying General Plan designations and zoning standards to potentially allow taller buildings, greater density, reduced building setbacks, modified parking requirements, and/or other strategies, while simultaneously protecting and expanding equitable access to opportunities, community livability, and desirable aspects of community character.

The project would result in changes to the County's Zoning Regulations, which include physical standards, allowable activities, and development procedures, and potentially changes to the County's General Plan Land Use maps, which specify the basic uses and densities appropriate to various unincorporated areas. These changes would apply to parcels when new buildings and/or site improvements are being considered.

For more about the project, please visit [www.RezoningNorthFairOaks.org](http://www.RezoningNorthFairOaks.org).

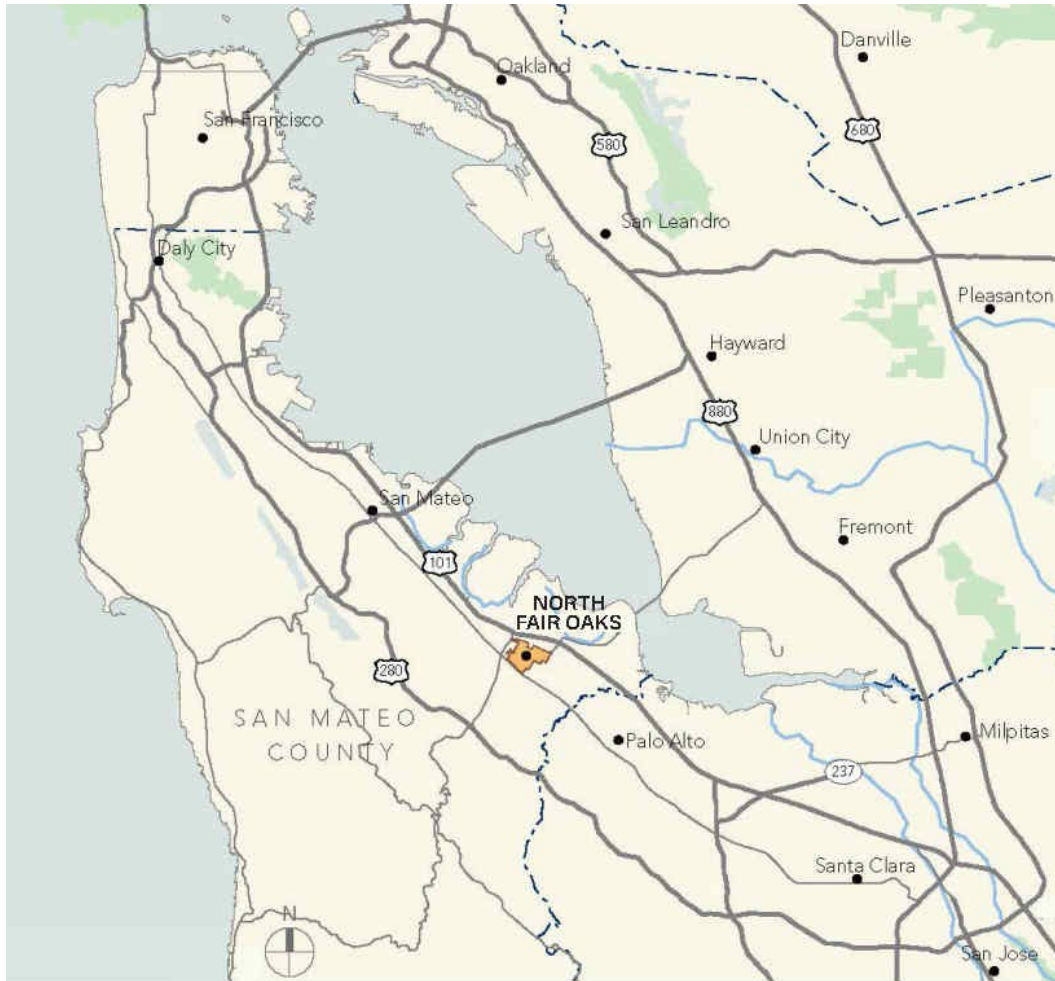
**POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:** The County determined an EIR was the appropriate level of CEQA review, following a preliminary review of the project. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(a), because an EIR is needed, an initial study has not been prepared. Therefore, a programmatic EIR presumes potential impacts for many required CEQA topics and will analyze them in full. The following environmental issues are anticipated to be analyzed in detail in the EIR:

- Aesthetics;
- Air Quality;
- Biological Resources;
- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources;
- Geology and Soils;
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions;
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials;
- Hydrology and Water Quality;
- Land Use and Planning;
- Noise;
- Population and Housing;
- Public Services and Recreation;
- Transportation; and
- Utilities and Service Systems.

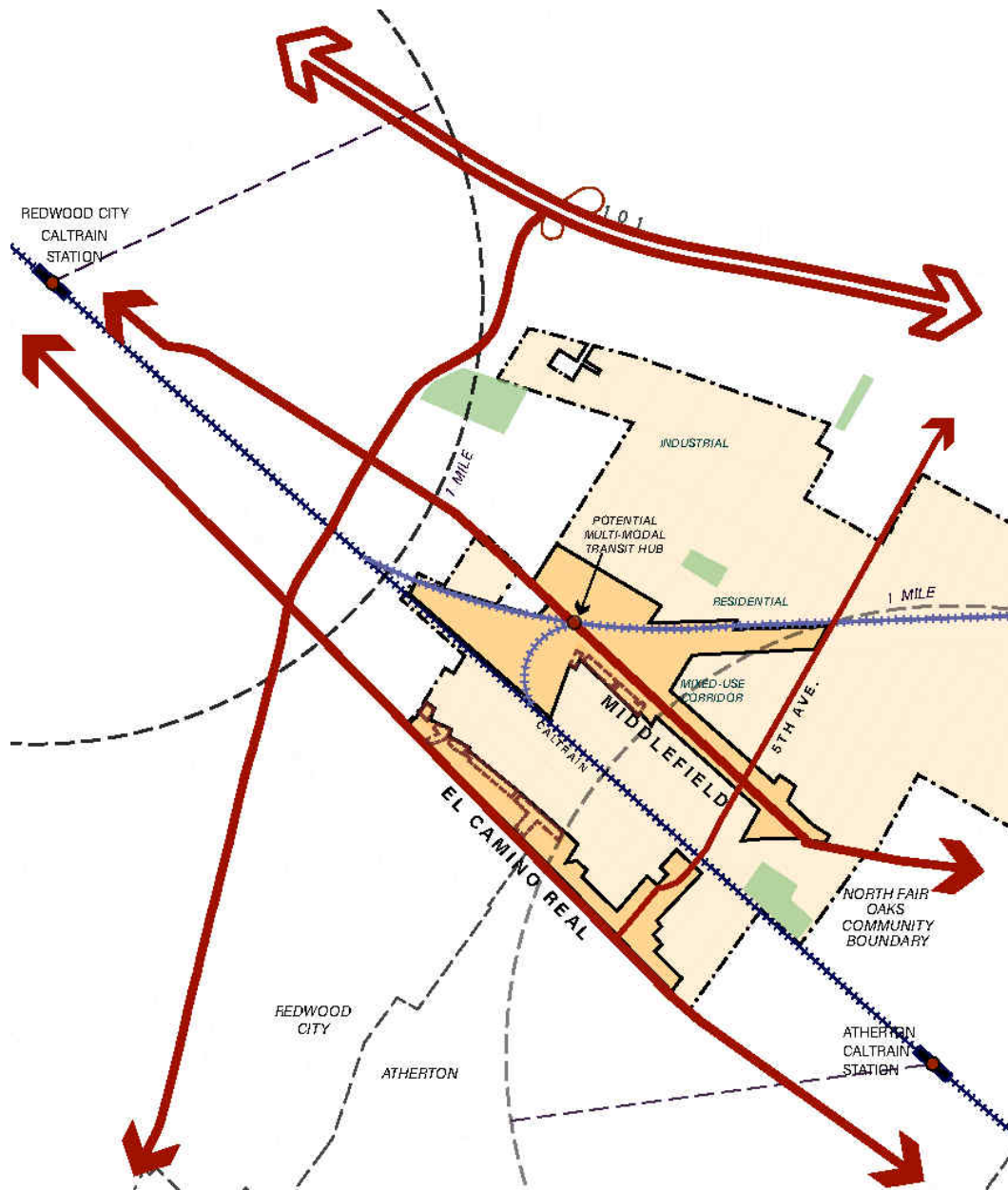
Other environmental topics, including agriculture and forestry resources, energy, mineral resources, and wildfire are anticipated to be less than significant as future projects would be subject to existing review requirements and regulatory stipulations. Thus, they will be discussed in the EIR in a limited analysis.

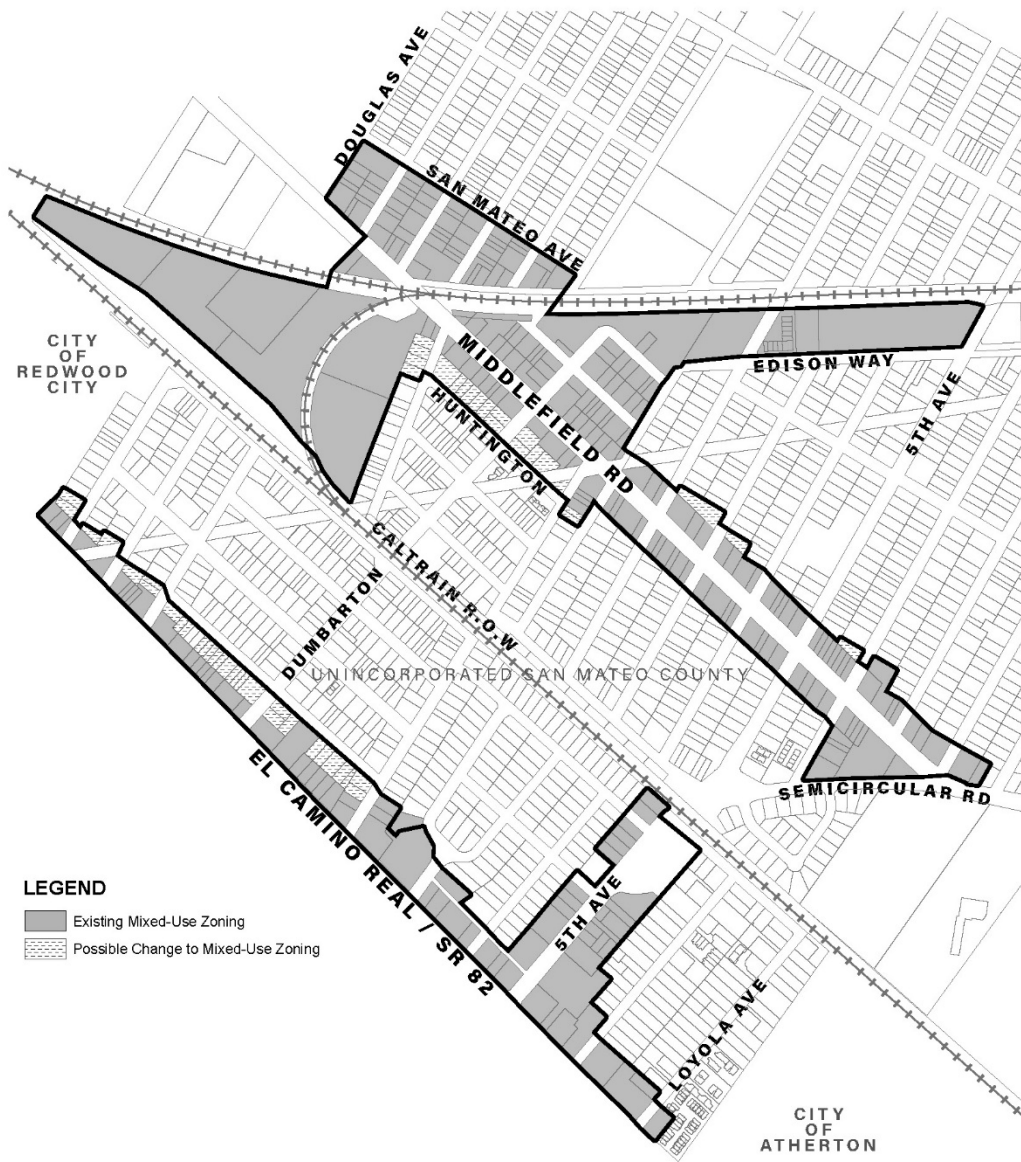
The Draft EIR will also examine a reasonable range of alternatives to the project, including the CEQA-mandated No Project Alternative and other potential alternatives that may be capable of reducing or avoiding potential environmental effects while generally meeting most of the project objectives. The Draft EIR will also analyze the cumulative impacts that could result with adoption and development under the project.

### PROJECT LOCATION MAP



# PROJECT VICINITY MAP

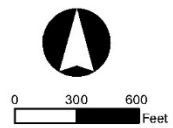




**LEGEND**

- Existing Mixed-Use Zoning
- Possible Change to Mixed-Use Zoning

**REZONING PROJECT AREA**





**LEGEND**

- Auto
- Industrial
- Mixed Use
- Multi-family
- Parking & Open Storage
- Professional Bldg. and Offices
- Public & Quasi-Public
- Retail and Restaurants
- Single Family
- Vacant Land

**EXISTING LAND USE**

