3.0 Project Description

3.1 BACKGROUND

Under California state law¹, every city and county is required to have a general plan. The general plan is to be comprehensive and long-range in guiding the physical development of the incorporated city, plus any land outside city boundaries that has a relationship to the city’s planning activities. To this end, the California Supreme Court has called the general plan “the constitution for all future development” within a given community.²

The project analyzed in this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is the adoption and long-term implementation of a comprehensive update and revision of the 1990 Redwood City General Plan. The New General Plan will serve as the blueprint for the City of Redwood City (City) and will establish goals, policies, and programs for the long-term physical development, quality of life, and public safety in the community. The New General Plan will include a land use designation map (described in further detail in Section 3.55) that replaces the land use designation map associated with the 1990 General Plan.³ The City has established 2030 as the horizon year for the New General Plan; in other words, the year by which the City would expect that policies and programs would be realized and a further comprehensive review of the plan may be warranted.

This EIR is being prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines. This EIR is a Program EIR prepared in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. Section 15168 allows for the preparation of a Program EIR for a series of actions that can be characterized as a single project.

3.2 PROJECT LOCATION

Figure 3-1 shows the project’s regional location. Redwood City is located in the San Francisco Bay Area on the San Francisco Peninsula in southeastern San Mateo County. It is bounded on the north by the cities of San Carlos and Foster City, the cities of Atherton and Menlo Park on the south, the Town of Woodside and unincorporated San Mateo County on the west, and on the east, by the San Francisco Bay. Major existing transportation facilities include US Highway 101 (U.S. 101), Interstate 280 (I-280), State Route 84 (Woodside Road within the City), and State Route 82 (El Camino Real), Caltrain, the Port of Redwood City, and the San Carlos Airport.

The area covered by the New General Plan, as shown in Figure 3-2, consists of the corporate limits of the City as well as lands within the City’s “sphere of influence.”

¹ Government Code Section 65300 et seq.
² Lesher Communications, Inc., v. City of Walnut Creek, 52 Cal. 3d 531, 540 (1990).
³ The one exception is the Cargill Property, further discussed below. As per Appendix A of the New General Plan, the land use designations for this site are unchanged from the 1990 General Plan. The New General Plan will carry forward the 1990 General Plan designations for this property.
Legend

- Redwood City New General Plan Area

1 inch equals 6,250 feet

Source: NAIP 2005; Redwood City GIS 2008
The term “sphere of influence” applies to the area designated by the San Mateo County Local Agency Formation Commission (also known as LAFCO) as the probable, future physical boundary or service area of the City. The San Mateo County LAFCO identifies the City’s sphere of influence as primarily the Emerald Hills, Selby, and North Fair Oaks neighborhoods, in addition to areas within and immediately adjacent to the Canyon neighborhood. The sphere of influence lands may have postal addresses in the City, but such areas are actually outside the existing City limits and, as a result, are currently outside of the City’s regulatory jurisdiction. Land use regulatory authority in the sphere of influence areas is held by San Mateo County. However, certain portions of the sphere of influence receive one or more services administered by the City, including water and sewer services. Overall, planning decisions made for the City are assumed to have a bearing on growth and development in these unincorporated adjacent areas; hence the term “sphere of influence.” For ease of reference, the plan area is separated into neighborhoods as shown in Figure 3-2. This grouping includes traditional City neighborhoods, but also includes the Bayfront and Bair Island.

3.3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

In January 2007, the City Council and Planning Commission adopted a set of “guiding principles” representing desired outcomes and objectives for the New General Plan. These guiding principles form the basis for several of the lead agency’s project objectives.

- Replace the current general plan prepared in 1990 with a new plan that reflects the goals and aspirations of the community through the year 2030
- Ensure New General Plan achieves compliance with all applicable state laws and regulations
- Plan for sustainability within our finite resources including but not limited to open space, water, energy, and air quality
- Ensure that change harmonizes with existing development to preserve our historic and neighborhood character
- Strengthen economic vitality to provide jobs, services, housing, revenues and opportunities
- Preserve and generate awareness of our cultural, educational, economic, and recreational diversity and historic heritage
- Partner with and embrace our neighborhoods to improve the health, safety, and well being for all in our community
- Continue to make community participation an important part of achieving a greater city
- Work to develop attractive, convenient transportation alternatives to the automobile, including a unique transportation hub and ferry system
- Design for active and safe pedestrian and bicycle-friendly streets and public spaces
3.4 PROJECT COMPONENTS

Under California Government Code Section 65302, a general plan is required to contain seven “elements” or chapters. The New General Plan includes all seven State-mandated elements, including Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety, plus several optional elements, including Historic Resources, Human Services, and Cultural Resources, which respond to important local issues. Within the New General Plan, the City sets forth its overall principles for growth, change, and governance in a series of goals, policies, and implementation programs that build on the community’s assets, while constructively addressing its challenges and opportunities. The goals, policies, and implementation actions provide a prioritized, progressive, and practical set of policy measures within each element of the New General Plan.

The format of the New General Plan groups the required elements into five major chapters to ensure internal consistency and improve readability. The chapters are:

- **Built Environment**: The Built Environment Chapter includes background information regarding the overall vision for the built environment in the City. Goals and policies in this Chapter are related to land use, urban design, circulation, economic development, historic resources, and infrastructure.

- **Housing**: The Housing Element includes background information regarding the housing needs, constraints to the development of housing, and resources (including land) available for housing. Goals and policies are designed to facilitate the development of housing, and especially affordable housing within the City, and to achieve compliance with regulations of the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

- **Building Community**: The Building Community Chapter provides background information and policies on the places and programs that serve broad community interests, including community gathering spaces, recreation, trails, libraries and lifelong learning opportunities, child care, human services, public facilities and services, arts and culture, and governance.

- **Public Safety**: The Public Safety Element includes background information on natural and human-caused hazards and promotes measures emphasizing prevention, public education, and emergency preparedness to minimize risks to life and property in the event of a disaster. Goals and policies are related to air quality and climate change, environmental hazards (including earthquakes, floods, fires, hazardous materials, aviation hazards, and terrorism), emergency responses to hazards, and noise.
Natural Resources: The Natural Resources Chapter focuses on preserving, protecting, conserving, reusing, replenishing, and efficiently using Redwood City’s natural resources. Background information and policies are related to water supply, energy conservation, natural habitat and open space, the City’s urban forest, and agricultural uses.

Table 3-1 below shows the correspondence between the seven required general plan elements and the layout of the New General Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required General Plan Element</th>
<th>Chapter Location within New General Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Use</td>
<td>Built Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulation</td>
<td>Built Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space</td>
<td>Natural Resources and Building Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Public Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>Public Safety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Redwood City, 2009

The New General Plan also includes an Introduction and a Glossary. The Introduction summarizes the citizen participation process fundamental to the development of the project, and the resulting overall vision for the New General Plan. The Glossary provides definitions of terms used throughout the document.

3.5 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The New General Plan would introduce nine new land use designations and one new overlay as shown on Figure 3-3. As a comparative reference, existing General Plan land use designations are shown on Figure 3-4. The New General Plan strives to enhance the diverse character of Redwood City’s various neighborhoods, corridors, and centers, and to decrease dependence on motor vehicles and increase pedestrian, bicycle, and transit usage through appropriate land use and transportation planning.

New land use designations include Residential - Medium High, Commercial - Office/Technology, Mixed Use - Corridor, Mixed Use - Neighborhood, Mixed Use – Waterfront,

---

4 An overlay district is a regulatory tool that when placed over an existing base land use designation, identifies special provisions in addition to those in the underlying base designation.
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Mixed Use – Live/Work, Marina, and Hospital. A new overlay designation, Industrial – Light Incubator Overlay, is intended to promote new startup industrial businesses along Broadway, just east of Woodside Road. **Table 3-2** summarizes the development standards for the new and continuing land use designations in the New General Plan.

**Table 3-2  New General Plan Land Use Designation Development Standards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Designation</th>
<th>Development Standards</th>
<th>Allowable Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Density/Intensity</td>
<td>Maximum Height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0 – 7 du/ac</td>
<td>2 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Detached, low-density residential units. Accessory units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>7.1 – 20 du/ac</td>
<td>3 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Detached and attached residential units. Common open space. Parking facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-High</td>
<td>20.1 – 30 du/ac</td>
<td>3 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Single structures or collection of cohesive structures housing multiple units with common open space and amenities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>30.1 to 40 du/ac</td>
<td>4 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High-density, multi-story residential with common areas and shared parking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>0.6 FAR</td>
<td>2 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower-intensity retail, office, and service-oriented businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>1.0 FAR</td>
<td>3 stories; 5 stories within US 101 corridor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td></td>
<td>General, retail, commercial service, restaurants, lodging, vehicle sales and service, commercial recreation, professional office, medical and financial institutions, and similar business activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Professional/Technology</td>
<td>1.0 FAR</td>
<td>5 stories; 8 stories as part of coordinated master plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Small- and large-scale professional offices, office complexes and campuses, related uses that support office uses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Use</td>
<td>No limit, with maximum of 2,500 additional units and 3-12 stories, primarily 8 stories, with</td>
<td>Offices, theaters, retail businesses, restaurants serving day-time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Designation</th>
<th>Development Standards</th>
<th>Allowable Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Density/Intensity</td>
<td>Maximum Height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>586,000 square feet of commercial/office space</td>
<td>maximum capacity of 2.4 million square feet of non-residential space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Use</td>
<td>60 du/ac / 1.0 FAR</td>
<td>6 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Commercial and Residential)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Use (Commercial)</td>
<td>0.5 FAR</td>
<td>4 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Use (Residential)</td>
<td>60 du/ac</td>
<td>4 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live/Work</td>
<td>20 du/ac / 2.0 FAR</td>
<td>3 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Nonresidential)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Use (Nonresidential)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterfront</td>
<td></td>
<td>Maximum heights prescribed individually through project site plan review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Use Designation</td>
<td>Development Standards</td>
<td>Allowable Uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Density/Intensity</td>
<td>Maximum Height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Facility</td>
<td>1.0 FAR</td>
<td>3 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public and Quasi-Public</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>2.0 FAR</td>
<td>5 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>3 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marina</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Use (Commercial and Residential)</td>
<td>20 du/ac / 0.5 FAR</td>
<td>3 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Use (Commercial only)</td>
<td>0.5 FAR</td>
<td>3 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open Space</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled Waterway</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco Bay</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Reserve</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Redwood City New General Plan, 2009.*

5 Regarding the Cargill Property: For this property, the definition of the Open Space Preservation is unchanged from the 1990 General Plan. Please see Appendix A of the New General Plan for additional information.

6 Regarding the Cargill Property: For this property, land use designations (and the definitions of those designations) are unchanged from the 1990 General Plan. Please see Appendix A of the New General Plan for additional information.
The New General Plan would include a number of land use designations essentially similar to the 1990 General Plan. For example, the New General Plan includes a Residential Low Density designation that allows the same density as the equivalent designation in the 1990 General Plan (see Figure 3-3). Neighborhoods composed primarily of single-family residences would see no change to allowable density in the New General Plan. Similarly, the New General Plan carries over a medium density residential designation that would be applicable to largely the same area as a similar designation applied in the 1990 General Plan.

For the salt crystallization pond area known as the Cargill Property, the New General Plan retains the exact same land use designations from the 1990 General Plan (Urban Reserve and Preservation) for this 1,436-acre property located along the Bayfront south and east of Seaport Boulevard. Please refer to Appendix A of the New General Plan for details.

In January 2009, in order to allow for a more comprehensive and in-depth study of the development options for this property, the City Council determined that any changes to the 1990 General Plan policies applicable to the Cargill Property should be considered and implemented in a separate process for completion after the New General Plan process. In May 2009, the City received an application from the project proponent for the development of this site, with a mix of residential, commercial, institutional, and open space/flood control uses. In August 2009, the City initiated a separate review and public participation program regarding the application for development of this site.

In accordance with CEQA requirements to evaluate cumulative impacts, which include impacts from reasonably foreseeable future projects, this EIR makes certain assumptions about the future development of the Cargill Property to prepare the cumulative impacts analysis. As explained in detail in Section 6.0, Cumulative Impacts, these assumptions are based on details provided within the aforementioned May 2009 application submittal. Assumptions are based on the project-proponent’s estimates of the quantities of proposed development (housing, retail, other commercial uses) and proposed acreages of land to be restored to wetlands or used as open space. These estimates are used in the cumulative impact analysis of this EIR.

The inclusion of Cargill Property development in the cumulative impacts analysis of the New General Plan EIR would not convey any development entitlements to the Cargill Property’s owners, and is not intended to express or reflect the City’s intentions with respect to any particular, proposed land uses for the Cargill Property. As the application for development of this site moves forward, a separate and comprehensive environmental review process would be required under CEQA and also under NEPA.

Most other general plan designations have been altered in terms of regulations or area of applicability in the New General Plan.

The key changes associated with the New General Plan include the creation of five different mixed-use designations, targeted primarily at key focus areas, which are described in greater detail in subsequent paragraphs. Among the key changes the City wishes to implement through the New General Plan are the following:
The new Mixed-Use Live/Work Land Use Designation would be applied along Main Street between Woodside Road and Maple Street in the Downtown, among other locations. This designation is intended to allow the local-serving light industrial uses while allowing for live/work residential opportunities, promoting the development of a transit-oriented urban village neighborhood near Downtown and the Caltrain Station. Live/work environments combine residential occupancy with commercial activity in the same building space, generally with the resident using the combined or adjacent commercial space for his or her business. Typical uses include artist lofts, studio spaces, small offices, and similar uses. Creative industrial workspace areas are permitted, provided that activities limit or confine noise, dust, and vibration impacts.

Areas within the North Fair Oaks neighborhood (sphere of influence) would be designated for an increase in density, from Residential - Low to Residential – Medium. Some high-density neighborhoods, for the most part adjacent to Downtown, would be designated to a lower density such as Residential – Medium High in order to protect some residential uses, particularly historic structures. Through General Plan policy, historic structures are encouraged to be protected, particularly residential structures that contribute to the history of Redwood City. Through land use designation changes and policies, the proposed General Plan focuses on protecting and preserving established residential neighborhoods throughout Redwood City. All single-family neighborhoods in the hillsides and surrounding residential areas, and in Redwood Shores, will be protected and preserved with maintained lower residential densities.

Commercial land uses (standing alone from any within mixed-use areas) would primarily be concentrated in areas with freeway access and visibility immediately north of Downtown, and in areas with existing large-scale employment uses (Redwood Shores, Seaport Center, and Pacific Shores). The New General Plan would establish zones of preferred commercial use, such as Commercial – Regional along the Veterans Boulevard corridor. Some commercial uses, specifically Commercial – Office/Professional, would also be located along the Veterans Boulevard corridor and the Broadway corridor east of Downtown.

In recognition of historic industrial uses associated with the Port of Redwood City, industrial land uses would also be designated for areas within the Bayfront area. Industrial – Light land use designations would be primarily limited to areas surrounding the Broadway corridor just east of the Downtown, creating a preferred use zone for industrial uses. Port-related industrial land uses would be designated within the Port of Redwood City, further concentrating industrial uses to a preferred use zone within the plan area. The industrial land use designations would generally remain unchanged from the existing General Plan, with the exception of the replacement of some industrial uses for commercial uses (Commercial – Office/Professional) along the Broadway corridor to the east of Downtown.

Lands designated as open space in the New General Plan would be largely the same as those so designated in the existing General Plan, with the exception of
the southern portion of Bair Island. In the existing General Plan, the southern portion of Bair Island is designated for future urban development. However, in the New General Plan, this portion of Bair Island would be designated as Open Space. Open space land use designations, including lands under preservation and park land, in the New General Plan would be primarily located in the Bayfront area, including Bair, Greco, and Bird Islands. Portions of the San Francisco Bay and associated waterways and sloughs would also be designated as Open Space in this Bayfront area. Edgewood County Park would also maintain its Open Space – Park land use designation under the New General Plan. All existing parklands in the City would be indicated as Open Space – Parks.

**FOCUS AREAS**

The New General Plan land use map concentrates most new land use designations in several geographic areas that were identified as having the greatest potential for change over the twenty year planning horizon. In these areas, the New General Plan sets forth new land use designations as well as pertinent policies and programs to guide growth and change. **Figure 3-5** illustrates the general location of these focus areas.

Notably, the identification of these “focus areas” does not imply that all growth and change would occur in these areas. The New General Plan will allow for development to occur throughout the City, consistent with the policy direction set forth in the New General Plan. This EIR is evaluating the environmental impacts of the New General Plan as a whole, not only the anticipated change areas.

- **Downtown.** The New General Plan would build upon the continuing renaissance of the City’s historic core and would further the vision of creating a vibrant city center with offices, theaters, retail businesses, and restaurants serving the residences, day time businesses, and night-time entertainment populations. The New General Plan emphasizes Downtown’s established public spaces and its traditional urbanism.

- **El Camino Real Corridor.** The El Camino Real Corridor builds upon the established and urbanizing Redwood City Downtown by adding a complementary mix of uses along the corridor. New mixed-use designations will provide a range of residential, commercial, office, and public space intended to implement the Grand Boulevard concept. This concept envisions a repurposed El Camino Real that will take advantage of transit stations and mixed uses to create a pedestrian-friendly corridor.

- **Veterans/Broadway Corridor.** The Broadway component of this corridor envisions a street car/transit corridor that would connect this industrial/commercial center to the Downtown. New mixed use designations would provide additional housing opportunities immediately along the corridor. Through a proposed new urban design strategy, Veterans Boulevard would feature a major entry point from the U.S. 101 freeway. Residential development would be located west of Woodside Road. The Light Industrial designation, east of Woodside Road, is expected to remain and redevelop over time. A Light-
Focus Areas

Source: Redwood City Draft General Plan, 2009

Legend
- Bayfront / Redwood Creek / Harbor Center
- Broadway
- Downtown
- El Camino Real
- Middlefield Road
- Veterans Blvd
- Woodside Road
- Gateway Centers
- City Boundary
- Sphere of Influence

1 inch equals 5,500 feet

San Francisco Bay

Bird Island

Bair Island

Bair Island

Foster City

Belmont

San Carlos

Menlo Park

Greco Island

Bair Island

Bair Island

Bair Island

Bair Island

Bair Island

Bair Island

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Industrial Incubator Overlay would promote new start-up businesses and new development related to innovative light industrial and research and development businesses. The Veterans Boulevard component of this corridor envisions a mixed-use commercial/housing designation that would reflect both the adjacency of the U.S. 101 freeway as well as Downtown. Mixed uses would be designated along Redwood Creek and Veterans Boulevard near Downtown, to create a neighborhood with open spaces that fronts the creek and is well connected to Downtown.

- **Woodside Road Corridor.** The New General Plan anticipates re-invigorating the Woodside Road Corridor by concentrating residential and mixed uses at strategic focal points along the corridor. This corridor is expected to remain a local-serving corridor but transform to a more pedestrian-friendly collection of activity centers with walkable connections to transit routes and surrounding residential neighborhoods. Residential uses would fill in between the activity centers, thereby increasing the potential for activity center users.

- **Middlefield Road Corridor.** New land use designations have been applied along Middlefield Road to reflect the established mix of commercial uses along this corridor. The goal is to allow existing local- and regional-serving commercial land uses while allowing for some additional opportunities for residential uses, but protecting adjacent residential neighborhoods.

- **Bayfront Focus Area.** Mixed uses would be expanded in Bayfront, particularly along Redwood Creek to create a new destination point just north of the U.S. 101 freeway. The idea for this area is to create lively new water front neighborhoods that take advantage of proximity to the San Francisco Bay waters. The new mixed use designation would continue to allow for floating homes, docks, and access to the Bay. Part of this area would be included in a Redwood Creek/Harbor Master Plan (also described below) that emphasizes quality neighborhoods, destination waterfront businesses, and strong connections to Downtown.

- **Gateway Centers.** The City’s entrances from U.S. 101 onto Veterans Boulevard offer the first impression many visitors have of Redwood City. To convey Redwood City’s identity at these points of access, as well as to take better advantage of freeway visibility, the City envisions successful commercial and mixed use Gateway Centers near the Woodside/Veterans and Whipple/Veterans intersections. The Gateway Centers would support commercial, mixed use, and housing. Appropriate commercial uses would include hospitality businesses, large-scale commercial and retail centers, and high-quality office space with associated amenities. Attractive streetscapes and clear directional signage would complement the uses. Efforts would be made to enhance these entrances to the City with urban design features and landscaping that support and define Redwood City’s image.

- **Redwood Creek/Harbor Center.** Redwood Creek connects Downtown Redwood City to the San Francisco Bay. Through Redwood Creek, the City would seek to facilitate a new Center that embraces the water features that historically
defined the City. As envisioned, this Center would link Downtown, Redwood Creek, and the harbor area. In order to facilitate this vision, a master plan that embodies a cohesive vision would be developed.

**NEW GENERAL PLAN POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS**

The administrative core of the New General Plan consists of policies and implementation programs intended to realize long range community goals of the New General Plan. **Appendix A** lists all policies and implementation programs as presented within each Chapter of the New General Plan. The New General Plan policies and implementation programs are intended to provide detailed land use and design guidance for all City agencies to guide new development, growth, and change within the plan area over the next 20 years.

Additionally, the New General Plan includes policies and implementation programs focused on protecting and preserving the established residential neighborhoods through preservation of single-family residential land use classifications. For example, all single-family neighborhoods in the hillsides and surrounding residential areas and in Redwood Shores would be protected and preserved. Some higher density neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown would be re-designated to a lower density to protect historic structures, particularly those structures that contribute to the history of the City.

**TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS**

Several transportation and infrastructure improvements are planned within the plan area. For the purposes of this EIR, planned transportation and infrastructure improvements are assumed to occur as part of the New General Plan and are incorporated into the project’s anticipated development. Several of the transportation and infrastructure improvements are sponsored by federal, state, or other local agencies, as described below. **Figure 3-6** shows the location of these improvements throughout the plan area.

**Roadway Improvements**

The New General Plan proposes several roadway improvements within the plan area, including grade separations; linkages, such as the Blomquist Extension; and the implementation of lane reductions on roads, identified in the New General Plan as “pedestrian enhanced design.”

**Grade Separations**

Like many other communities on the San Francisco Peninsula, the plan area includes a number of at-grade rail crossings along the Caltrain (Union Pacific) rail corridor. At-grade crossings entail the use of warning lights, signals, crossing gates, and other equipment to prohibit road traffic from rail rights-of-way when trains are passing. As a result, roadway traffic must come to a complete stop at these at-grade crossings numerous times daily. In addition to stopping or delaying traffic, at-grade crossings present safety concerns for people and vehicles in the vicinity of fast-moving trains.
To improve local traffic and safety conditions, the New General Plan includes policies and implementation programs to replace several existing at-grade crossings with grade separations. Grade separations are anticipated to occur where the Caltrain tracks intersect with Whipple Avenue, Hopkins Avenue (which currently does not go through), Brewster Avenue, Broadway, Depot Circle, Maple Street, Main Street, and Chestnut Street. In addition, the New General Plan calls for expansions and improvements to several existing grade-separations within the plan area, including intersections along Jefferson Avenue, Woodside Road, and 5th Avenue. Policy BE-28.2 and Program BE-75 also encourage the development of grade separated roadway crossings as railroad tracks, particularly for the existing Caltrain and proposed High Speed Rail, which is envisioned to run in the Caltrain right of way. These separations would entail raising the tracks above the roadway or undergrounding the tracks beneath the roadway; roadway grades would be retained rather than going above or below railroad tracks.

**Blomquist Extension**

The Blomquist Extension was identified as a proposed transportation project within the Circulation Element of the existing General Plan. The existing General Plan indicated that Blomquist Street would be extended from Maple Street to Bair Island Road. The extension would be a new alignment with a new bridge across Redwood Creek. The extension would provide a 2-lane collector street serving new residential and mixed-use development. As this project has not yet been constructed, it is included within the New General Plan. New General Plan Policy BE-29.8 supports increasing the connectivity of all travel modes in the areas east of U.S. 101 and improving linkages in the plan area. Specifically, Program BE-63 of the New General Plan encourages the City to develop plans to extend Blomquist Street to Bair Island Road, similar to what is currently proposed under the existing General Plan.

**Pedestrian Enhanced Design**

The New General Plan proposes to reduce the number and/or width of lanes along several roadways in the plan area. These pedestrian enhanced designs are proposed in areas for several reasons. Streets that are (or appear) relatively wide to their surroundings encourage vehicles to travel faster, posing concerns in densely built-up areas where pedestrian and/or bicycle activity is common. Reducing the number of travel lanes can serve as an important tool in traffic calming, when combined with other measures, such as changes in traffic signal timing and control, that help achieve a safer and more balanced roadway network for all users.

The New General Plan identifies numerous street segments in the plan area being subject to lane reductions, or pedestrian enhanced design. Along most segments, the pedestrian enhanced design would result in an existing 4 lane road (2 lanes in each direction) being modified to 3 lanes (1 lane in each direction plus a center turning lane).

Policy BE-25.5 of the New General Plan calls for continued implementation of pedestrian enhanced design on streets with projected excess vehicle capacity to reduce either the number of travel lanes or the roadway width, and provide wider sidewalks, bicycle lanes, transit amenities, or landscaping.
Program BE-52 establishes the criteria for implementing such pedestrian enhanced design and encourages conducting engineering studies to determine the feasibility of implementing pedestrian enhanced design that would reduce the number of travel lanes on the following roadways:

- Veterans Boulevard (from 6 lanes to 4 lanes)
- Middlefield Road (from 4 lanes to 3 lanes)
- Jefferson Avenue between Hudson Street and Alameda de Las Pulgas and between Marshal Street and Veterans Boulevard (from 4 lanes to 3 lanes)
- Broadway between Maple Street and Douglas Avenue (from 4 lanes to 3 lanes)
- Brewster Avenue between El Camino Real and Elwood Street (from 4 lanes to 3 lanes)
- Farm Hill Boulevard (from 4 lanes to 3 or 2 lanes)

**U.S. 101 and State Route 84 Interchange**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is planning for future highway improvements on U.S. 101, including improvements to the U.S. 101 and State Route 84 interchange. Program BE-44 of the New General Plan indicates that the City should continue to actively participate in the process for the redesign of the U.S. 101 and State Route 84 interchange and ensure that the interchange provides access and circulation for all travel modes. The Building, Infrastructure, and Transportation Department would serve as the City’s responsible agency for continuing coordination with Caltrans.

**Redwood City Ferry Terminal**

The Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) has proposed the development of a ferry terminal in Redwood City with service to San Francisco and the East Bay. The intent of introducing a ferry service to the City is to enhance mobility and transportation choices of San Francisco Peninsula residents and to respond to the deficiencies in the regional transportation network, including traffic congestion and limited capacity on U.S. 101 and I-280. As proposed, WETA would develop a ferry terminal along the Redwood Creek channel, selecting from multiple terminal site alternatives on or near property controlled by the Port of Redwood City.

WETA completed a programmatic EIR in 2003 analyzing the potential expansion of ferry service throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. Redwood City was identified in this EIR as a potential new terminal location. In 2008, WETA began additional environmental work to finalize terminal site alternatives and otherwise evaluate the effects of introducing ferry service in Redwood City, but this work was halted in December 2008 due to the State of California budget crisis. As of spring 2010, WETA has not released any further studies or environmental reviews regarding potential ferry service.

The New General Plan seeks to develop attractive, convenient transportation alternatives to the automobile, including a unique transportation hub and ferry system. The New General Plan supports the establishment of the local ferry service in an environmentally...
sustainable alternative to the automobile, with the added benefit of providing a water-based emergency evacuation route. Policy BE-27.9 of the New General Plan supports new transit providers within the City, while Program BE-75 calls for regular collaboration with WETA to coordinate planning efforts for the proposed ferry station with appropriate land use designations and transportation connections.

**Streetcar System**

The New General Plan includes policies, implementation programs, and a conceptual diagram of a fixed-route streetcar network consisting of up to three lines that would intersect in Downtown. Specifically, Policy BE-27.2 of the New General Plan calls for pursuing the development of fixed guideway routes, such as streetcar or trolley lines, in areas of targeting development intensification and to connect major destinations. Program BE-58 of the New General Plan calls for studying the feasibility of implementing a streetcar system on Broadway, Seaport Boulevard, and Middlefield Road, as shown on Figure 3-7. Each line is conceptually envisioned to operate within existing travel lanes. The streetcars would connect major transportation facilities (the existing Caltrain station and the potential future ferry terminal) with employment areas and major corridors in the City. Additionally, these potential streetcar corridors would connect existing and future high-density neighborhoods to each other and other activity centers, such as Downtown and the Caltrain station.

The City has not yet identified a potential operator of any such network, whether regional (such as Samtrans), local, or private. Additionally, the type of vehicle, power source, speed, frequency of service, passenger boardings, capacity, timing, construction methods, and other details are not yet developed. Additional environmental review under CEQA may be required prior to implementation of any streetcar service.

**Downtown Features and Street Alignments**

Several features and improvements to the street alignments are proposed within the Downtown area to enhance pedestrian and bicycle access. Such improvements to the Downtown include realignments of intersections from existing conditions to conventional 4-way intersections (such as at Broadway/Spring Street/Maple Street and Marshall Street/Main Street). The New General Plan identifies the roadways within Downtown as pedestrian priority streets. These pedestrian priority streets are streets on which high volumes of pedestrian traffic are encouraged along the sidewalks, where pedestrian crossings have a high priority at intersections. Policy BE-25.3 and Program BE-49 of the New General Plan supports using the concept of complete streets to design, construct, operate, and maintain City streets to enable safe, comfortable, and attractive access and travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit users. New General Plan Policies BE-26.1 through BE-26.26 and Programs BE-35 through BE-59, and Programs BE-54 through BE-57 also call for the development of new and improvements to existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities, specifically for streets within Downtown as they are designated pedestrian priority streets.
Traffic Analysis in Downtown Redwood City

This EIR will examine the potential effects of modifying how traffic impacts are measured in the Downtown area. The New General Plan would carry over a special mixed-use land use designation for the Downtown area. This designation is intended to foster residential, commercial, and other uses in close proximity to transportation (Caltrain, buses, etc.) and in relatively high intensity compared to other areas of the City, and to promote alternative modes of transportation in the Downtown area. As part of the intent to foster this higher intensity of land uses and promote alternative transportation uses Downtown, the City will examine in this EIR the impacts of modifying how traffic analyses are conducted for future projects proposed within the Downtown area. Specifically, the City will consider omitting “Level of Service” intersection-based traffic analysis for the Downtown area only. Please see section 4.14, Transportation and Traffic, for further description and analysis.

ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE NEW GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan is a 20-year planning document that assigns land use policy and associated densities and intensities to all properties within the project area. In Redwood City, infill development represents the primary avenue for growth. Most of Redwood City is built out (at lower than permitted densities) and will not realistically redevelop over the life of the plan, and maximum build-out city-wide would grossly overestimate and unrealistically overstate future impacts.

The 2030 New General Plan development scenario did not assume the full buildout of the plan area – the theoretical amount of development that would occur if every parcel in the plan area were rebuilt to the new maximum allowable density and intensity set forth in the New General Plan – because a number of limiting factors reduce the feasibility of the realization of theoretical buildout scenario. These factors include the existing urban context, policies and programs that limit new growth, setting forth a development limit, and the existing regulatory environment. As such, the City has assumed that not every property in the City and plan area would be developed at the maximum residential densities or nonresidential intensities allowed by the New General Plan.

As part of the New General Plan program, the City conducted a study of land use patterns in the City since the adoption of the 1990 General Plan. This study is included as Appendix B. In the study, the City noted that during the lifetime of the 1990 General Plan, approximately 5 to 10 percent of all parcels city-wide had redeveloped under 1990 General Plan regulations. Along such major corridors as Woodside Road and El Camino Real, the City estimates that approximately 3 to 5 percent of lands fronting these roads overturned in roughly the last decade (1999-2008).

With few exceptions, the City notes that most remaining opportunity sites (vacant or underutilized), which the City reasonably considers to be those most likely to be developed or redeveloped in the future, are relatively small and located within densely inhabited areas.
Due to the City’s highly developed nature, when taken into account with relatively low historical parcel “turnover” rates, the full and complete redevelopment of every parcel in the City needed to achieve the maximum buildout of the plan area would be highly unlikely, particularly if assumed to occur in the next two decades alone. For this to occur, one would have to assume that all sites not currently at the maximum allowed level of development would need to be expanded and/or demolished/reconstructed at the maximum density and intensity standards set forth under the New General Plan. This scenario is very remote based on historical development patterns in Redwood City.

Based on this understanding of historic growth patterns and the location and size of remaining undeveloped parcels, the City’s study concluded that over the lifetime of the New General Plan (between 2010 and 2030), a more reasonable growth assumption would be as high as 30 percent for the key focus areas. This 30 percent figure represents roughly triple the amount of growth realized in previous decade. As such, the City believes this provides a conservative basis for conclusions about the amount of future growth. Therefore, buildout assumptions in the New General Plan and evaluated in this EIR assume less than maximum buildout of the City and plan area under the proposed density standards.

To ensure that new growth between 2010 and 2030 remains within the assumed amounts identified in the New General Plan and this EIR, the New General Plan and this EIR include policies and mitigation measures that would not permit the City to grow beyond the increment of development allowable under the New General Plan. Specifically, the New General Plan includes requirements for infrastructure concurrency with new development. Concurrency requirements typically establish that new development may not proceed before necessary infrastructure and utilities are available. The New General Plan includes an implementation program that would require the City to track in real time how existing and permitted development compares in relation to available infrastructure and water supply. The program would limit the issuance of new building permits to available water supply.

Table 3-3 summarizes the anticipated housing, population, and employment that could occur within the plan area to the 20 year planning horizon of the New General Plan. The 2030 numbers are compared to the 2030 demographics and growth projections established by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG).7

As shown on Table 3-3, implementation of the New General Plan would be expected to result in increases in population, housing, employment and employment-related development in the plan area by 2030. Population in the plan area would increase by about 19 percent over 2008 levels; the number of dwelling units would increase by about 29 percent, and the number of jobs would increase by about 48 percent. As shown above, the New General Plan would allow for higher rates of growth than estimated by

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7 ABAG growth projections for the year 2030 are only available for the City limits.
### Table 3–3 New General Plan 2030 Anticipated Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Housing</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Non-Residential Square Footage</th>
<th>Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City Limits</td>
<td>Sphere of Influence</td>
<td>Plan Area</td>
<td>City Limits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 (existing)</td>
<td>28,522</td>
<td>8,659</td>
<td>37,181</td>
<td>77,071</td>
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<tr>
<td>2030 ABAG Projections</td>
<td>33,070</td>
<td>Not computed</td>
<td>Not computed</td>
<td>87,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>2030 General Plan Anticipated Development (Project)</td>
<td>36,749</td>
<td>9,535</td>
<td>46,284</td>
<td>92,013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>8,227</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>9,103</td>
<td>14,942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Change</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Redwood City, 2009; ABAG 2008; California Department of Finance, 2008.
ABAG in its projections for the area. This is due in part to the fact that ABAG’s projections are based in part on the existing general plan (adopted 1990). If the New General Plan is adopted by Redwood City, it is anticipated that subsequent revisions of ABAG projections would more closely reflect buildout estimates of the New General Plan. Population, housing and employment impacts are evaluated in detail within Section 4.11, Population and Housing, of this EIR.

3.6 INTENDED USES OF THIS EIR

The policy framework set forth in the New General Plan would not result in the immediate construction of any new development. All new development within the City will continue to undergo the City’s development review and approval processes. Elected and appointed officials and City staff will review subsequent project applications for consistency with the New General Plan and prepare appropriate environmental documentation in compliance with CEQA and other applicable environmental requirements.

As provided by Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines, this EIR is a Program EIR. The goals, policies, land use designations, implementation measures, and other substantive components of the New General Plan comprise the “program” that is evaluated in this Program EIR. Subsequent activities undertaken by the City and project proponents to implement the New General Plan will be examined in the light of this Program EIR to determine the appropriate level of environmental review required under CEQA. Such subsequent implementation activities may include the following:

- Updating the Zoning Ordinance
- Rezoning of properties consistent with the adopted General Plan
- Approval of Specific Plans, Precise Plans, and other development plans and planning documents
- Approval of tentative maps, variances, conditional use permits, and other land use permits and entitlements
- Approval of redevelopment plans
- Approval of development agreements
- Approval of facility and service master plans and financing plans
- Approval and funding of public improvement projects
- Approval of resource management plans
- Issuance of municipal bonds
- Issuance of permits and other approvals necessary for implementation of the updated General Plan
- Acquisition of property

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8 Projections 2008. ABAG.
3.0 Project Description

- Issuance of permits and other approvals necessary for public and private development projects
- Updates to the City’s Housing Element and other General Plan Elements

Following the certification of the EIR and adoption of the New General Plan by the lead agency (City of Redwood City), other agencies may use this Program EIR in the approval of subsequent implementation activities. These agencies may include but are not limited to the following:

Local Agencies
- City of Redwood City
- County of San Mateo and associated agencies
- South Bayside System Authority

State and Regional Agencies
- California Department of Fish and Game
- California Department of Conservation
- California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD)
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- State Water Resources Control Board/San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)
- Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD)
- San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC)

Federal Agencies
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

3.7 SCOPING

The City issued two Notices of Preparation (NOP) related to the New General Plan and EIR. The first NOP was issued in February 2009; an updated NOP reflecting several project changes was issued in December 2009. Each NOP announced a public scoping meeting. These scoping meetings were convened on February 17, 2009 and December 15, 2009.

The City received numerous scoping comments from interested agencies and parties. Copies of the scoping letters are available for review at the Planning, Housing and Economic Development Department at City Hall. Comments from the scoping letters were sorted and reviewed. **Appendix C** of this EIR includes a matrix of scoping comments along with guidance as to where the issue or question is addressed in this EIR.