



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP)  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR)  
CITY OF SANTA CLARA GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

E-15020



Date: August 26, 2008

To: Responsible Agencies, Interested Parties and Organizations

Subject: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the City of Santa Clara General Plan Update and Scheduling of a Scoping Meeting at 6 p.m., September 17, 2008

Project Title: City of Santa Clara General Plan Update

Location: City of Santa Clara, California

Case Files: CEQ2008-01070, PLN2008-07267

The City of Santa Clara is preparing a General Plan Update (including a Housing Element Update), and has determined that a comprehensive Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be necessary. The City of Santa Clara requests your input regarding the scope and content of environmental analysis that is relevant to your respective agency's statutory/regulatory responsibilities in order to ascertain potential impacts of the proposed project. The City of Santa Clara, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will direct the preparation of an EIR for the project. The project description is provided in the attached Notice of Preparation (NOP).

Although specific proposals and revisions for the Santa Clara General Plan and Housing Element have not yet been determined, we are soliciting your comments. This will allow your input to be taken into consideration during formulation of the environmental effects to be addressed in the EIR. A description of the proposed action, location map, and preliminary identification of the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b) mandates each Responsible Agency to respond to an NOP within thirty days (30) after receipt. The review period will extend from August 28, 2008 through September 27, 2008. Your views and comments on how the project may affect the environment are welcomed. Please send your written response, with the name of your agency contact person, to the following address: Carol Anne Painter, City of Santa Clara Planning Division; 1500 Warburton Avenue, Santa Clara, CA 95050.

A community meeting on environmental issues was conducted on Monday, August 4, 2008, to solicit public input. A Scoping Meeting will be conducted at 6 p.m. on September 17, 2008, at the Santa Clara City Hall Council Chambers. If you have questions regarding this NOP or the Scoping Meeting, you can contact Carol Anne Painter at (408) 615-2450.

Carol Anne Painter, City Planner  
City of Santa Clara

8-27-08

Date

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP)  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR)  
CITY OF SANTA CLARA GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

**E-15020**

**1. PROJECT TITLE:**

City of Santa Clara General Plan Update

**2. LEAD AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS:**

City of Santa Clara  
Planning Division  
1500 Warburton Avenue  
Santa Clara, CA 95050

**3. CONTACT PERSON AND PHONE NUMBER:**

Carol Anne Painter  
City Planner  
(408) 615-2450  
[CAPainter@santaclaraca.gov](mailto:CAPainter@santaclaraca.gov)

**4. PROJECT LOCATION:**

The City of Santa Clara, located at the center of California's Silicon Valley, covers an area of 18.2 square miles. The City is situated between San José to the north, east, and south, and Sunnyvale and Cupertino to the west (Figure 1). Additionally, the Norman Y. Mineta International Airport borders the City to the east. With a 2008 population of 115,500, it is the third largest city in Santa Clara County.

Highway 101 passes east-west through the northern portion of the City, while Highway 237 borders the north. Interstates 880 and 280 skirt the southeast and southwest corners of the City, respectively. The City is also served by transit, including: the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) Light Rail along Tasman Drive in the northern portion of the City; and the Santa Clara Transit Center, with Caltrain, Altamont Commuter Express (ACE, which currently bypasses the station due to construction), VTA bus lines, and future BART, Capitol Corridors, and Automated People Mover services. On the City's north side, the Great America Train Station serves ACE, the Capitol Corridors and Amtrak, with pedestrian connections to the Tasman Light Rail line.

The Proposed Planning Area comprises all land within the City limits. The existing City limits include residential, commercial, and industrial developments, as well as public facilities comprised of parks, schools, public utilities, the Mission College Campus, and private institutions like Santa Clara University. Since the City is bound completely by neighboring jurisdictions, the Planning Area is confined to the City Limits (Figure 2).

5. **PROJECT SPONSOR'S NAME AND ADDRESS:**

E-15020

City of Santa Clara  
Planning Division  
1500 Warburton Avenue  
Santa Clara, CA 95050

6. **DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:**

The current City of Santa Clara General Plan was last comprehensively updated in 1992; the Housing Element was updated in 2002. Although many of the policies and ordinances in these documents are still relevant, much has changed since their adoption—particularly for the General Plan, which was adopted over 15 years ago. Since 2002, the City's population increased by 11 percent, while employment decreased significantly following the dot-com collapse in the early 2000s. However, employment generation is again on the rise, and the Association of Bay Area Governments projects that the City will add an additional 50,000 new jobs over the next 25 years. ABAG also expects population to increase to a projected 146,100—an increase of over 26 percent from 2008 to 2035. The General Plan Update provides the community with an opportunity to clarify its vision for future development patterns, transportation systems, economic development opportunities, and sustainable growth. The General Plan will have a horizon to 2035. The Housing Element is being updated concurrently, with a horizon of 2014.

As part of the General Plan Update, the Housing Element will be included in the CEQA analysis for the General Plan.

The General Plan Update will likely address the following topics, which will be combined into an integrated Plan:

- Land Use;
- Housing;
- Community Design and Historic Preservation;
- Sustainability;
- Transportation;
- Parks and Recreation;
- Conservation/Environmental Quality;
- Safety;
- Noise; and
- Public Facilities and Services.

### ***General Plan Update***

Work on the General Plan Update is in progress. The scope includes a review of background material and preparation of two initial working papers: *Population, Demographics, Employment and the Real Estate Market* and the *Opportunities and Challenges Report*. The market analysis (Working Paper #1) documents existing and future market conditions, with specific focus on key employment and industrial areas in the City. The *Opportunities and Challenges Report* (Working Paper #2) will contain a description and series of maps documenting existing land uses, public facilities, and environmental conditions within the City of Santa Clara. Coinciding with the preparation of the first two working papers, initial outreach in the form of stakeholder interviews and community workshops were held in May, June, and August of 2008. This outreach will continue and also contribute to the environmental analysis for the project.

The next step of the General Plan Update will include development of potential land use/transportation alternatives through direct participation with the community and General Plan Steering Committee. The alternatives will focus on changes at identified locations within the City. A citywide survey will be conducted to help formulate the alternative plans, followed by an additional community workshop to further identify and refine concepts for the alternatives. The resulting concepts for the alternatives will be presented to the Steering Committee for further refinement, followed by a discussion of the relative advantages and disadvantages of each with City decision-makers. Following this process, a Preferred Plan will be prepared and reviewed by the community and Steering Committee prior to presentation to City decision-makers. Based on the Preferred Plan, the General Plan Update will be drafted.

A final community workshop will ensure that the community's needs have been addressed in the proposed Preferred Plan. A series of public hearings will then allow City decision-makers to consider the proposed Plan.

### ***Housing Element Update***

During preparation of the General Plan Update, the Housing Element Update will also be prepared. The Housing Element will encompass all requirements for housing elements as defined under State law. Key housing issues were discussed with housing providers in July 2008 and at a community workshop in August 2008.

## 7. EIR

This NOP is a required publication at the outset of the EIR process.

The EIR will provide a programmatic environmental assessment of the potential consequences of the proposed General Plan Update. It will discuss how General Plan policies could potentially affect the environment, identify any significant impacts, and recommend measures to mitigate those impacts. The EIR will also consider the potential environmental impacts of alternatives, and identify an environmentally superior alternative. Subsequent environmental review will be conducted for major development projects, public works and

infrastructure improvements to evaluate site-specific issues.

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**8. SURROUNDING LAND USES AND SETTING:**

Santa Clara's Planning Area boundaries coincide with the municipal boundaries of San José to the north, east and south, and Sunnyvale and Cupertino to the west. The southern end of the San Francisco Bay is also just north of the City. Several creeks and rivers run through and adjacent to the City, including the Guadalupe River—along a portion of the eastern border of the City—and the San Tomas Aquino, Saratoga, and Calabazas creeks run north-south through the City.

**9. OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES WHOSE APPROVAL IS REQUIRED:**

No other public agency is required to approve the Santa Clara General Plan Update. However, development under the General Plan may require approval of State, federal and responsible trustee agencies that may rely on this EIR for information relative to their area of expertise and jurisdiction.

**10. POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS TO BE CONSIDERED:**

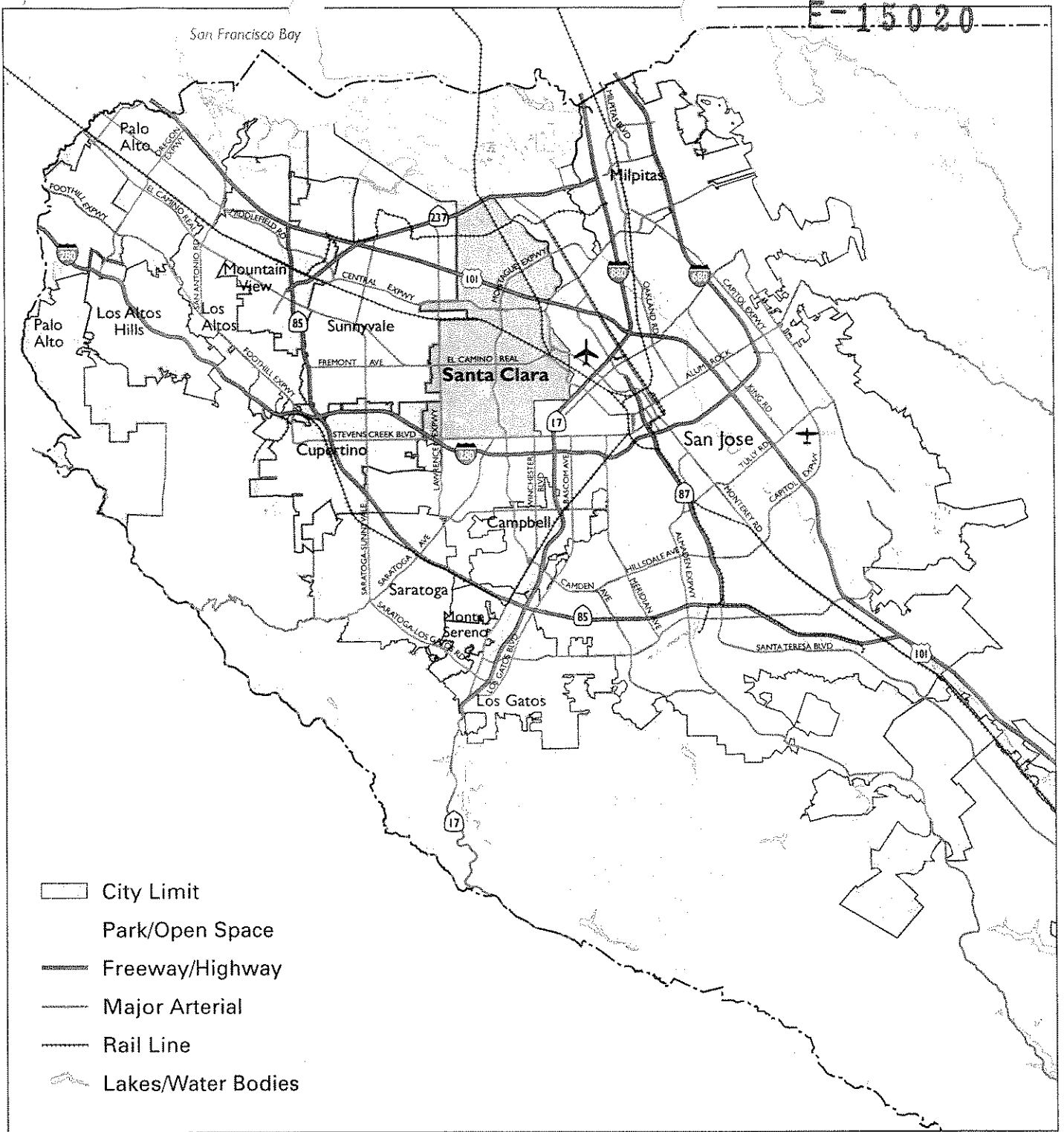
Preliminary topics for the EIR include:

- Land Use (including jobs and housing);
- Aesthetics and Visual Resources;
- Open Space and Recreation;
- Biological Resources;
- Cultural Resources;
- Transportation and Traffic;
- Air Quality;
- Noise and Vibration;
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity;
- Hydrology and Flooding;
- Public Services and Utilities;
- Energy;
- Climate Change; and
- Hazardous Materials and Toxics.

In addition to the potential environmental effects listed above, the EIR will evaluate potential cumulative effects and potential growth inducing impacts of the proposed Santa Clara General Plan Update as well as alternatives to the proposed General Plan Update. The No

Project alternative will evaluate the impacts resulting from continued implementation of existing plans, policies, and regulations which govern the City. As appropriate, other alternatives that would avoid or lessen environmental effects related to the proposed Santa Clara General Plan Update will be discussed. The draft EIR will also recommend measures to mitigate any significant environmental impacts.

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

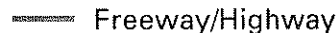
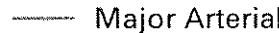

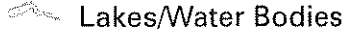
-  City Limit
-  Park/Open Space
-  Freeway/Highway
-  Major Arterial
-  Rail Line
-  Lakes/Water Bodies



Figure 1  
City of Santa Clara  
Subregional Location

Figure 2 E-15020  
City of Santa Clara  
Planning Boundary

--- City Limits

