

SECTION 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.1.1 PEIR Analysis

This document includes descriptions of the physical environment in the project area, as those conditions existed at the time the PEIR Notice of Preparation for the *Envision San José 2040 General Plan* was circulated starting on July 31, 2009. The consideration and discussion of environmental impacts that result from the development allowed under the General Plan evaluate whether the environmental effects are significant; that is: do those effects exceed stated levels, or “thresholds” of significance. Mitigation measures, proposed to minimize the identified significant environmental effects, are also described in the discussion of environmental impacts and mitigation measures, per CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.

The proposed *Envision San José 2040 General Plan* project consists of: the development of General Plan goals, policies and implementation actions; the development of land use designations and identification of specific job and housing growth capacity to guide future growth; identification of targeted areas to develop or redevelop to accommodate this future economic and population growth (Growth Areas); and setting policy for the provision of City services for new and existing development of all types; for the City of San José through the year 2040. This PEIR analyzes the proposed update to the General Plan, including the proposed policies, and incorporating through those policies and the proposed General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram the Preferred Land Use Scenario (or Preferred Scenario) that was recommended by the *Envision San José 2040 General Plan Task Force* and accepted by the City Council for further examination in April 2010. The proposed *Envision San José 2040 General Plan* and the Preferred Land Use Scenario are summarized in *Section 2.0 Description of the Proposed Project*.

This EIR is a Program EIR (PEIR) that, in conformance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, is being prepared to address a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and will be carried out as individual activities under the same authorizing statutory and regulatory authority and have generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways. A PEIR provides a more exhaustive consideration of effects and alternatives than would be practical in many EIRs on individual General Plan Amendments or entitlement projects, ensures consideration of cumulative impacts, and allows the City of San José to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures to deal with basic environmental issues or cumulative effects. Subsequent activities proposed under the *Envision San José 2040 General Plan* will be examined in light of this Program EIR to determine whether or what additional environmental review is needed.

1.1.2 General Plan Background

The General Plan is a State-required legal document (Government Code Section 65300) that each planning agency in California prepares and the legislative body of each county and city adopts to provide a comprehensive, long-term plan for the physical development of the county or city. A General Plan must include the following seven mandatory elements specified in Government Code Section 65302: (a) land use, (b) circulation, (c) housing, (d) conservation, (e) open space, (f) noise, and (g) safety. The General Plan is the City’s official policy for its future character, form, and quality of development. The General Plan describes the amount, type and phasing of development needed to achieve the City’s social, economic, and environmental goals. It is the policy framework for decision making on both private development projects and City capital expenditures.

The current General Plan, *Focus on the Future San José 2020 General Plan* (San José 2020 General Plan) was adopted by the City Council in 1994. Amendments to the General Plan have been approved to accommodate changing economic conditions and development patterns over the years but the General Plan has not been comprehensively updated since 1994.

1.2 PROJECT LOCATION

The City of San José is located in the easterly half of the Santa Clara Valley at the southern tip of San Francisco Bay. The proposed *Envision San José 2040 General Plan* provides a vision for future growth and development within the City's existing Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary (approximately 143 square miles) and also plans for all areas within the City's Sphere of Influence (approximately 280 square miles).¹ The *Envision San José 2040 General Plan* also includes those urban, unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County that are within San José's Urban Growth Boundary and Urban Service Area. San José is the largest city in Santa Clara County, both in terms of population and land area. The city's location within the San Francisco Bay region is shown on Figure 1.2-1.

The City's Urban Service Area (USA) is located entirely within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and includes approximately 138 square miles (approximately 88,406 acres), most of which is developed. As of July 2007, the city had approximately 4,906 acres of vacant land within the Urban Service Area (USA). Approximately one-third (1,616 acres) of the city's vacant land is located in the North Coyote Campus Industrial Area.

1.3 ORGANIZATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The *Envision San José 2040 General Plan* is comprised of seven chapters, as follows: 1) Envision San José 2040, 2) Thriving Community, 3) Environmental Leadership, 4) Quality of Life, 5) Land Use and Transportation Diagram, 6) Interconnected City – Land Use and Transportation Policies, and 7) Implementation. The seven State-required elements of the General Plan are integrated into the chapters and a reference guide to the location of the required elements is included in an appendix to the General Plan. Chapter 1 includes the purpose, legal context, vision, process, concepts, planning history, and key issues for the General Plan Update. Chapter 2 describes how the City will continue to facilitate economic development, promote arts and culture, engage the community, and implement fiscally sustainable policies in order to maintain a thriving community. Chapter 3 describes the City's policies for environmental leadership including measurable sustainability, environmental resources, environmental considerations/hazards, and infrastructure. Chapter 4 describes the community identity and how the quality of life will be maintained and improved through policies for vibrant neighborhoods, community design, housing, education and services, cultural opportunities, private community gathering facilities, and parks and recreation. Chapter 5 contains the land use and transportations network designations. Chapter 6 contains policies for land use, transportation, and the trail network. Chapter 7 includes the major implementation processes that will be used to achieve the City's objectives, goals, and projected jobs and housing growth outlined in the *Envision San José 2040 General Plan*.

¹ The City's legal jurisdiction where it controls land use decisions is 178 square miles; however, its sphere of influence includes adjacent unincorporated lands that are within its future service area. The Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary represents the limits of planned urbanization for the City beyond which lands within the City's jurisdiction and/or future service area are intended to remain rural in character.

1.4 REFERENCE AVAILABILITY

Copies of all documents referred to in this PEIR are available for review during normal business hours at:

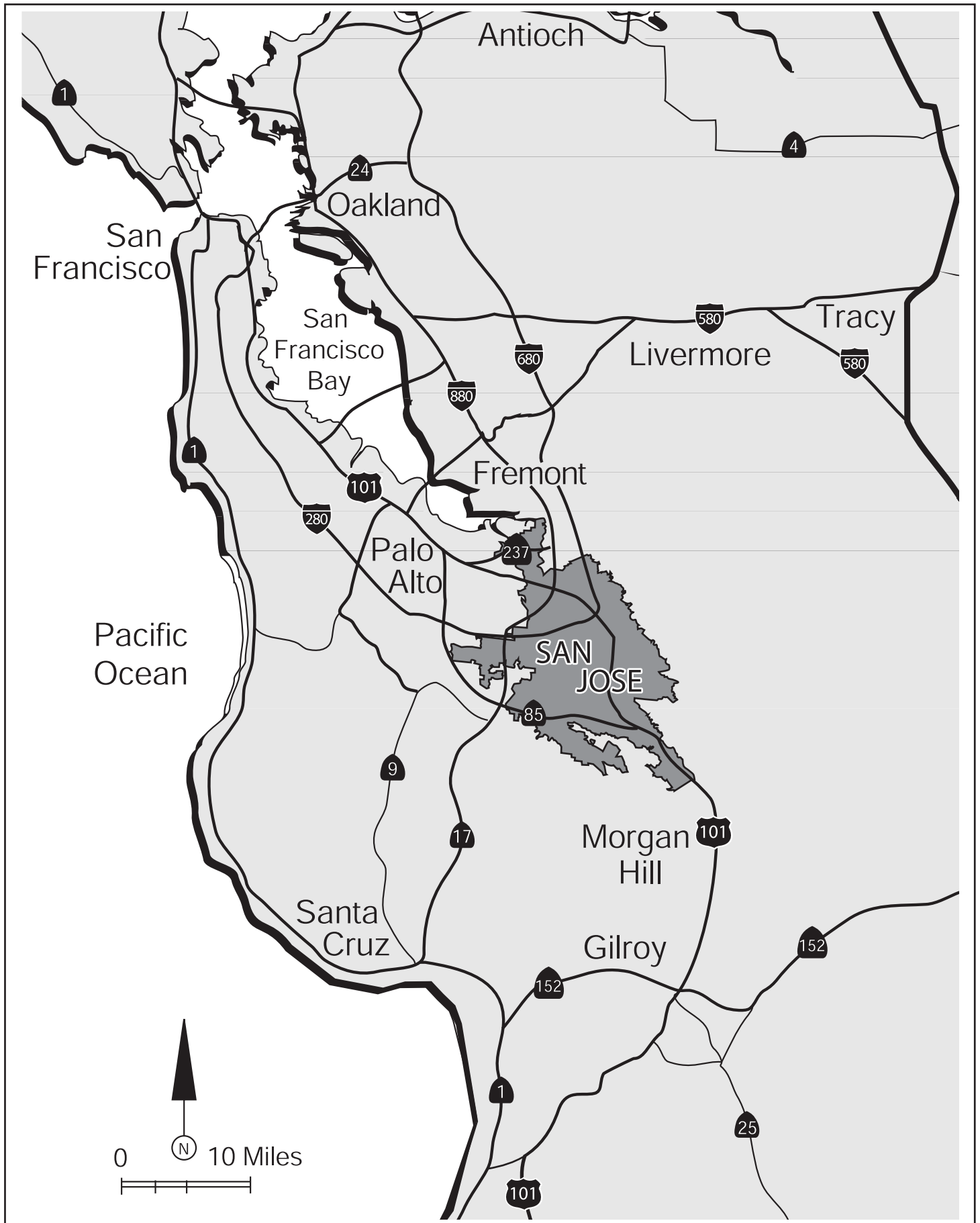
San José City Hall
Department of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement
200 East Santa Clara Street, 1st Floor
San José, CA 95113-1905

1.5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The City of San José, as required under CEQA, encourages public participation in the environmental review process. Opportunities for comments by public agencies and the general public include responding to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the Draft Program EIR (PEIR), participation and comment at public scoping meetings, written comments on this Draft PEIR, and submittal of written or verbal comments at future public hearings.

The NOP for this Draft PEIR was circulated from July 31, 2009 to August 31, 2009. The NOP and responses to the NOP are included in Appendix A of this document. In addition, PEIR scoping meetings were held for the project at the San José City Hall on August 12, 2009 and August 19, 2009.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Lead Agency is required, after completion of a Draft PEIR, to consult with and obtain comments from public agencies having jurisdiction by law with respect to the proposed project, and to provide the general public with an opportunity to comment on the Draft PEIR. The Draft PEIR will be available for review during the 45-day public review and comment period at City Hall, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library, all of the branch libraries, and on the City's website. Written comments concerning the environmental review contained in this Draft PEIR must be submitted to the Lead Agency, the City of San José, to the attention of John Davidson, Senior Planner, Department of Planning, Building, & Code Enforcement, 200 East Santa Clara Street, Tower 3, San José, CA 95113-1905 during the 45-day public review and comment period.



REGIONAL MAP

FIGURE 1.2-1