

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION**  
**OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR**  
**THE GREAT AMERICA THEME PARK MASTER PLAN PROJECT**

**Date of Distribution: March 10, 2016**

PROJECT APPLICANT: Cedar Fair

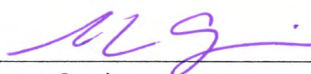
FILE Nos.: PLN2014-10851 and CEQ2016-01007

As the Lead Agency, the City of Santa Clara will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the above-referenced Project and would like your views regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be addressed in the EIR. This EIR may be used by your agency when considering approvals for this project.

The project description, location, and probable environmental effects which will be analyzed in the EIR for the project are identified in attached materials.

According to State law, the deadline for your response is 30 days after receipt of this notice; however, we would appreciate an earlier response, if possible. Please identify a contact person, and send your response to:

City of Santa Clara  
Attn: Jeff Schwilk, AICP  
1500 Warburton Avenue  
Santa Clara, CA 95050  
Phone: (408) 615-2450  
Email: [jschwilk@santaclaraca.gov](mailto:jschwilk@santaclaraca.gov)

  
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Sharon Goei  
Acting Director of Planning & Inspection

Date: March 10, 2016

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***Introduction***

The purpose of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the environmental effects of a proposed project that an agency may implement or approve. The EIR process is intended to provide information sufficient to evaluate a project and its potential for significant impacts on the environment; to examine methods of reducing adverse impacts; and to consider alternatives to the project.

The EIR for the proposed project will be prepared and processed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended. The EIR will only address the significant or potentially significant effects of the proposed project. In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, the EIR will include the following:

- A summary of the project;
- A project description;
- A description of the existing environmental setting, environmental impacts, and mitigation measures for the project;
- Alternatives to the project as proposed; and
- Environmental consequences, including (a) any significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the project is implemented; (b) any significant irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources; (c) the growth inducing impacts of the proposed project; and (d) cumulative impacts.

***Project Location***

The proposed project is located at 4701 Great America Parkway in Santa Clara. The project site includes two parcels, APNs 104-42-014 and -019, with a combined area of approximately 112 acres. An additional 55 acres of parking lots serving the Great America Theme Park are located north of the park entrance (refer to Figures 1.2-1 and 1.2-2).

***Project Description***

The site is designated for *Regional Commercial* use in the City's 2010-2035 General Plan. The Great America property is zoned CT- Thoroughfare Commercial.

Cedar Fair proposes a Master Planned Development (PD) Zoning covering the 112-acre Great America Theme Park site, that would continue to allow all existing attractions and operating practices and provide flexibility for future (20 years) proposed new attractions and operations. For purposes of the Master Planned Development (PD) Zoning, the Great America property has

been divided into four zones, each of which would allow for a mix of uses intended to meet Great America’s long-term operational goals. Development within the zones may include the installation of new rides and replacement of rides and attractions, and extension of the operating season and hours of operation of the Great America theme park and amphitheater. The number and size of existing and proposed rides is shown in Table 1, below. Maximum building and structure heights are proposed up to 250 feet, but will ultimately be determined based on Mineta San Jose International Airport airspace requirements by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

<b>Existing Rides</b>	<b>Proposed Maximum Total Large Rides</b>
6 rides of 50 – 100 feet	8 rides of 50 – 100 feet
3 rides of 100 – 200 feet	11 rides of 100 – 200 feet
2 rides of over 200 feet	8 rides of over 200 feet

The project also includes a commercial/entertainment district. This commercial/entertainment district would comprise up to 250,000 square feet of floor area. The existing approximately 110,000 sf Redwood Amphitheater would be a part of the commercial/entertainment district, continuing in its current use, and 40,000 sf of additional theater space currently within Great America would be repurposed. A maximum of 10,000 seats would be allowed within the existing amphitheater and planned outdoor stage facilities. Special events of a non-concert nature would also be allowed within the entertainment zone. A total of 100,000 sf of new commercial space is proposed within the 250,000 sf commercial/entertainment district. The proposed commercial/entertainment district may be located outside of the Theme Park entrance and open to the general public separate from the rest of the Theme Park.

Vehicle access to the project site will continue to be provided from the three existing driveways serving the site on Great America Parkway, Tasman Drive, and Agnew Road. No modifications are currently proposed to the existing site access points.

***Potential Environmental Impacts of the Project***

The EIR will identify the significant environmental effects anticipated to result from build-out of the project, as proposed. The EIR will include the following specific environmental categories as related to the proposed project:

*1. Land Use*

The Great America Theme Park is surrounded by office buildings, the Santa Clara convention center and Levi’s (49ers) Stadium, the San Tomas Aquino Creek channel, and residential uses. The site is part of the Bayshore North Entertainment District (former Bayshore North Redevelopment Plan area). The EIR will describe the City’s goals and policies for the area and the project’s conformance with those policies. The EIR will also describe existing utility easements on the site (SFPUC and PG&E) and the restrictions they impose on future development of Great America. The EIR will describe potential land use conflicts that may

result from the proposed project and identify mitigation measures to reduce impacts, as warranted.

## 2. *Noise*

Project-generated noise is a primary issue of concern regarding proposed new rides and potential operational changes at Great America. The EIR will assess increases in operational noise levels at surrounding receivers from noise generated by existing rides and park operations in conjunction with future rides and proposed operational changes. Significant noise impacts resulting from the project will be evaluated and mitigation measures will be identified, as warranted.

## 3. *Aesthetics*

The proposed project would introduce new and replacement rides similar in visibility to the existing tower elements and taller rides in the Great America Theme Park. The EIR will describe the existing visual character of the site and potential changes proposed by the project. The discussion will include locations of public views of the park and any potential blockage of views from public vantage points. Any potential impacts from light and glare resulting from the new attractions and uses on the site and mitigation measures will be identified.

## 4. *Geology*

The EIR will describe the existing geologic conditions on the site based upon previously prepared geotechnical analyses for existing rides and attractions. Potential impacts related to geologic conditions will be described and mitigation measures identified, including the requirement for future ride-specific geotechnical analyses.

## 5. *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*

The project site is located near industrial and commercial businesses. The EIR will describe the potential for hazardous materials contamination to be present on or near the site and for the project to exacerbate any existing soil or groundwater contamination. With regards to the potential for hazardous materials present to affect the project and its patrons (environmental conditions affecting the project), it is noted that a December 2015 CA Supreme Court decision indicates this discussion is no longer required under CEQA. This information will be included in the EIR to inform the planning process by discussing how the project complies with relevant local policies/regulations that protect land uses from existing hazards. The EIR will identify mitigation measures for significant hazardous materials impacts, as necessary.

## 6. *Biological Resources*

The existing Great America Theme Park contains extensive pavement, structures, and ornamental landscaping. The EIR will evaluate bird strike impacts to Pacific Flyway migratory birds from proposed tall structures, lighting, towers, guy wires, etc. Program-level measures and best

practices for preventing or avoiding bird strikes will be identified for any potential impacts. Project impacts to burrowing owls will also be evaluated and mitigation measures identified, as necessary. The EIR will evaluate tree species impacts based on the City of Santa Clara's tree ordinance and replacement ratios. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

#### 7. *Cultural Resources*

The EIR will include a discussion of potential cultural resource impacts resulting from the project. Appropriate mitigation measures will be identified and implemented, in the event cultural resources are encountered during project construction.

#### 8. *Air Quality*

The EIR will address the regional air quality conditions in the Bay Area and discuss the proposed project's impacts to local and regional air quality during the operational and construction phases of the project. Temporary construction related impacts such as construction vehicle exhaust and airborne particulates (i.e., dust) will also be discussed. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

#### 9. *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*

The EIR will evaluate the project's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, in conformance with the methodology of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and the recently adopted Climate Action Plan of the City of Santa Clara. Project design measures to reduce energy use and GHG emissions will be discussed. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

#### 10. *Hydrology and Drainage*

The EIR will describe the existing drainage and stormwater quality features at Great America and the changes in site drainage and hydrological conditions resulting from the project. Any impacts resulting from the proposed project will be described and mitigation measures identified, as warranted.

#### 11. *Traffic and Parking*

The EIR will examine traffic conditions resulting from the implementation of the proposed project. The transportation impact analysis (TIA) prepared for the EIR will identify the characteristics of the site and surrounding roadway network, existing roadway cross-sections, intersection lane configurations, traffic control devices, and surrounding land uses. Project-generated traffic trips will be estimated using the appropriate vehicular trip generation rates from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation manual. Traffic intersection level of service impacts will be evaluated based on City of Santa Clara and County Congestion Management Program (CMP) guidelines. The magnitude of project trips on freeway segments

near the site will be determined and compared to the CMP's threshold for determining the need for freeway level of service analysis. A site circulation and access review will be completed to determine the adequacy of the proposed site plan. The EIR will analyze the required parking and parking demand for each component of the proposed development, including any shared parking associated with Levi's Stadium.

The TIA and EIR will identify project impacts and the locations and types of improvements or modifications necessary to mitigate significant project traffic impacts, as warranted.

#### *12. Utilities*

The EIR will describe the ability and capacity of the existing utilities serving the project site to continue to serve the proposed project.

#### *13. Energy*

The EIR will include an Energy section to address increased energy use resulting from the project. Any features that will reduce energy consumption will be identified.

#### *14. Other Areas*

The EIR will describe the project's potential impacts on recreation, population and housing, and public services. Mitigation measures will be identified, as necessary, for significant impacts.

#### *15. Cumulative Impacts*

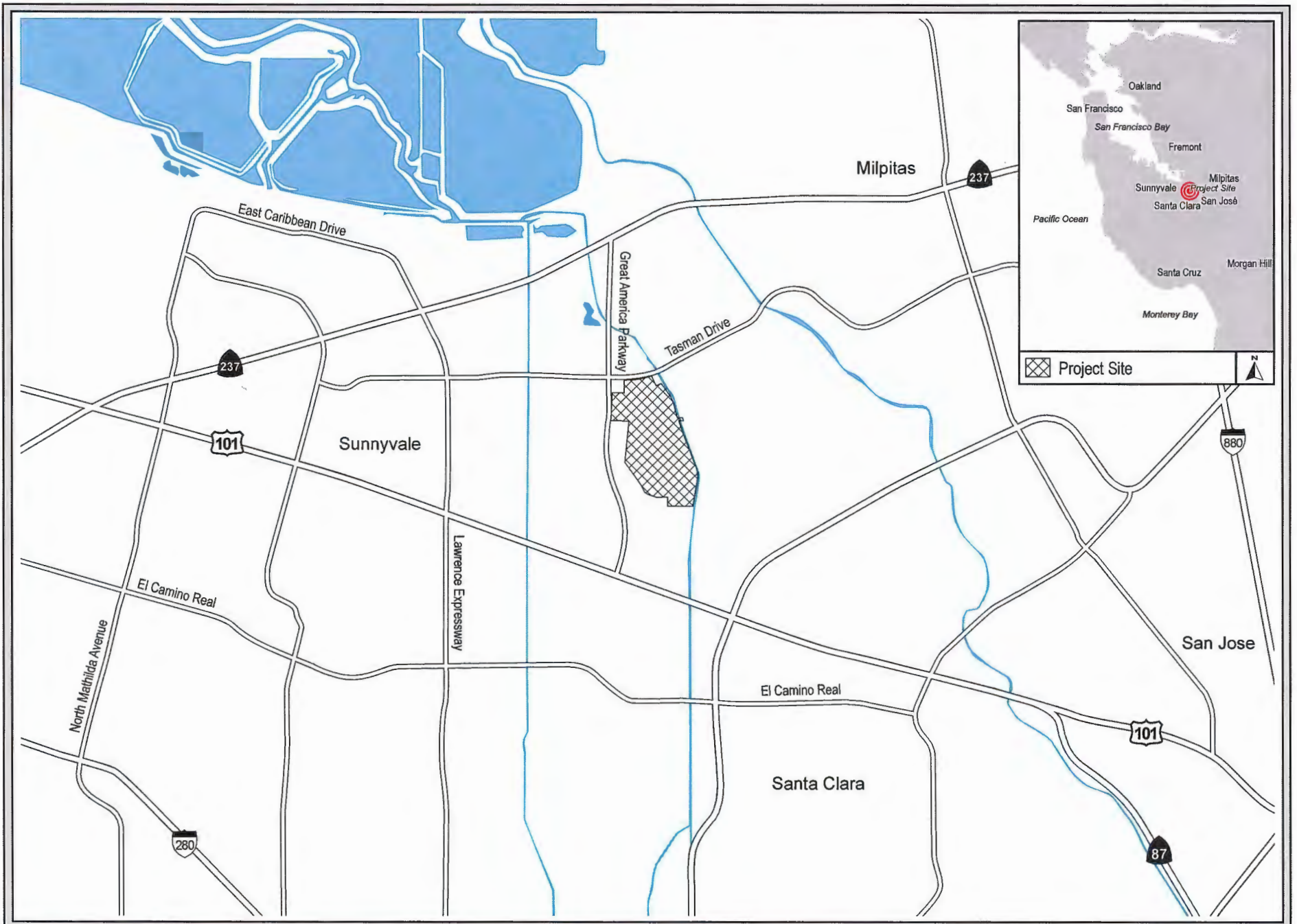
The EIR will include a Cumulative Impacts section which will address the potentially significant cumulative impacts of the project when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the area. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant cumulative impacts, as warranted.

#### *16. Alternatives*

The EIR will examine alternatives to the proposed project including a "No Project" alternative and one or more alternative development scenarios depending on the impacts identified. Alternatives discussed will be chosen based on their ability to reduce or avoid identified significant impacts of the proposed project while achieving most of the identified objectives of the project.

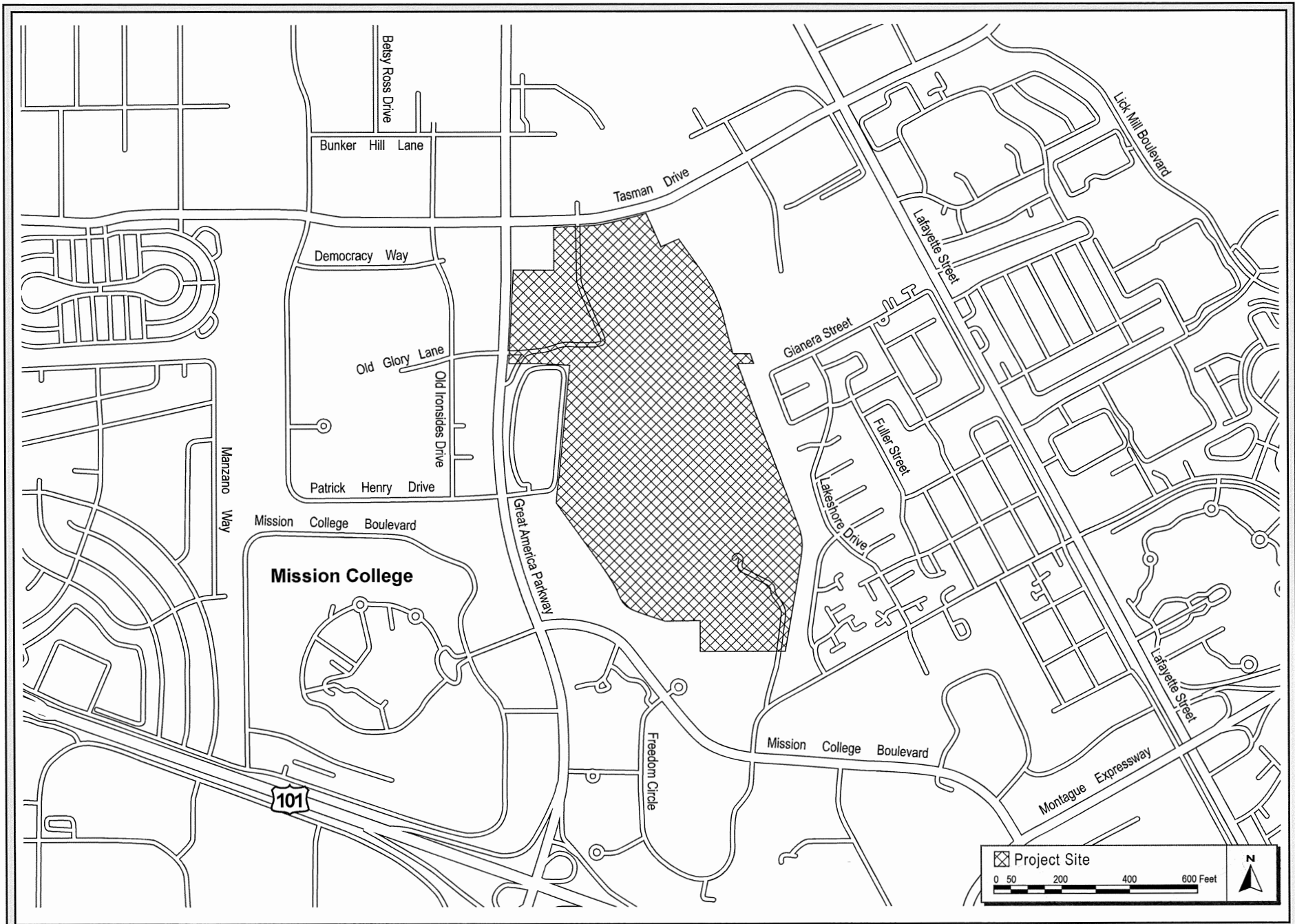
#### *17. Significant Unavoidable Impacts*

The EIR will identify those significant impacts that cannot be avoided, if the project is implemented as proposed.



REGIONAL MAP

FIGURE 1.2-1



VICINITY MAP

FIGURE 1.2-2