NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF
A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR THE CITY NATIONAL CIVIC AUDITORIUM LOADING PROJECT

March 2020

Introduction

The purpose of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the environmental effects of the 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.

A Supplemental EIR is prepared when it is determined by the discretionary authority that changes proposed in an approved project will require revisions to the previous EIR because of possible new impacts or an increase in severity of previously identified impacts. As the Lead Agency, the City of San José will prepare a Supplemental EIR to the Downtown Strategy 2040 Final EIR to address the environmental effects of the proposed City National Civic Auditorium Loading 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 and the requirements of the City of San José. The SEIR will focus on potentially significant issues pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15178. In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, the EIR will include the following:

- A summary of the project, project impacts, and alternatives;
- A project description;
- A description of the existing environmental setting, environmental impacts, and mitigation measures for the project;
- Alternatives to the project as proposed (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[a]); 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 project site includes McCabe Hall at 135 West San Carlos Street and the original Civic Auditorium at 145 West San Carlos Street in Downtown San Jose. The approximately 2.5-acre project site is on the block bounded by West San Carlos Street, West Market Street, Almaden Boulevard and Park Avenue. The site is currently developed with the Civic Auditorium, McCabe Hall, a vehicular loading area, and associated landscaping. Regional and aerial vicinity maps of the project site are provided in Figures 1-1 and 1-2.

Project Description

The proposed project would demolish nearly 89 percent of McCabe Hall, a 1964 addition to the 1934 San José Civic Auditorium, and develop an improved, approximately 27,500 square foot auditorium loading/ unloading area in the space made available. This total includes the approximately 24,660 square foot McCabe Hall addition to the City National Civic Auditorium and the existing loading area. The portion of McCabe Hall that would not be demolished includes 3,494 square feet on the ground floor that contains existing kitchen and concession areas and restrooms that would remain.

The proposed project would include four basic components:

1. Demolition of McCabe Hall, including the majority of the ground floor and entire mezzanine level. Approximately 12,400 square feet of the resulting vacant space would be reserved as a new parcel for anticipated, yet unknown, future development which would be consistent with the current General Plan Land Use designation and zoning for the site.
2. Development of a new auditorium loading area and loading dock in the remaining vacant space, including parking lanes for 2 semi-trucks and 4 passenger buses. The loading area would also include an improved pedestrian exit plan and pedestrian easements.
3. Reconfiguration of the West San Carlos Street curb and sidewalk to facilitate direct access from West San Carlos Street to the loading area, for tour vehicles.
4. Restoration of the 1934 façade of the West Hall, an original element of Civic Auditorium that would be uncovered by the demolition of McCabe Hall.

The proposed site plan is illustrated in Figure 1-3.

Possible Required Project Approvals:

1. Public Project Permit
2. Tentative Map Approval
3. Demolition Permits
4. Building Permit
5. Grading Permit
6. Public Works Clearances
7. Historic Preservation Permit
8. City of José Roadway Easements

Potential Environmental Impacts of the Project

The EIR will describe the existing environmental conditions on the project site and will identify the potentially significant environmental effects anticipated to result from development of the project as proposed. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted. The EIR will include the following specific environmental categories as related to the proposed project:

1. Aesthetics

The proposed project would demolish McCabe Hall, a 1964 addition to the original San José City National Civic Auditorium in the downtown area of San José. The EIR will describe the existing visual setting of the project area and the visual changes that are anticipated to occur as a result of the proposed project. The EIR will also describe the project's conformance with the City of San José General Plan policies pertaining to visual and aesthetic impacts. The EIR will also discuss possible light and glare issues from the development.

2. 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 according to the 2019 Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) CEQA guidelines and thresholds.

The EIR will describe the existing air quality conditions in the Bay Area and will evaluate the operational and construction air quality impacts on nearby sensitive receptors of the proposed project in accordance with current BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines and thresholds. If significant construction or operational air quality impacts are identified, based on the technical analysis, mitigation measures will be identified.

3. Biological Resources

The EIR will address the potential impacts related to the removal of existing trees and other vegetation on the project site. Tree replacement will be identified as mitigation in accordance with standard replacement ratios commonly applied to development projects in the City of San Jose. The EIR will also discuss the proposed Project's consistency with the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan. Mitigation measures will be identified to minimize significant biological resource impacts, as appropriate. Habitats in the project area are low in species diversity and include predominately urban adapted birds and animals. The EIR will address the loss of trees on-site, within and adjacent to the construction zones. In addition, the EIR will identify and discuss potential biological impacts resulting from construction of the project.

4. Cultural Resources

This area of San José is considered a sensitive area for prehistoric and historic resources. The San Jose Civic Auditorium is a designated City of San Jose Landmark. A Historic Resources Technical Report confirming the significance and character-defining features of McCabe Hall and the Civic Auditorium will be prepared for the project and included in the SEIR. The results of the Historic Technical Report will be used to identify potential impacts to historic resources and mitigation measures, if required. The

EIR will also address the potential for disruption to subsurface resources. If significant impacts are identified, mitigation measures will be identified.

5. Energy

The EIR will address the potential increase in energy usage on-site and proposed design measures to reduce energy consumption. Mitigation measure for energy impacts will be identified, as appropriate.

6. Geology & Soils

The project site is in a seismically active region in the United States. The EIR will discuss the possible geological impacts associated with seismic activity and the existing soil conditions on the project site. Mitigation measures will be identified to minimize significant geological impacts, as appropriate.

7. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The EIR will address the project's contribution to regional and global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Proposed design measures to reduce energy consumption, which in turn would reduce GHG emissions, will be discussed.

8. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Development in the project area is a mix of cultural, retail, hotel, and office land uses. The EIR will summarize known hazardous materials conditions on the project site and within the area will address the potential for hazardous materials impacts to result from the demolition and construction process. Hazards associated with aircraft operations of the Norman Y. Mineta San José International Airport will also be described. Mitigation measures will be identified to minimize significant hazardous materials impacts, as appropriate.

9. Hydrology and Water Quality

Based on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood insurance rate maps, the EIR will address the possible flooding issues of the site as well as the effectiveness of the storm drainage system and the projects effect on storm water quality consistent with the requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Mitigation measures will be identified to minimize significant hydrological and water quality impacts, as appropriate

10. Land Use

The project site is located within a developed urbanized area of San José surrounded by hotel, office, and commercial land uses. The EIR will describe the existing land uses adjacent to and within the project area. Land use impacts that would occur as a result of the proposed project will be analyzed, including the consistency of the project with the City's General Plan, zoning code, and compatibility of the proposed and existing land uses in the project area.

11. Noise and Vibration

Noise levels in the project area are primarily influenced by vehicular noise on West San Carlos Street, and the surrounding roadways. The EIR will discuss noise that would result from operation of the proposed project, including a discussion of the increase in traffic noise that would result from implementation of the project, and the impact of any noise increase on nearby sensitive receptors. The EIR will also discuss temporary construction noise. Noise levels will be evaluated for consistency with applicable standards and guidelines in the City of San José.

12. Public Services

The EIR will assess the potential for the proposed project to increase demand on public services, including police and fire protection, and recreational facilities. The EIR will address the availability of public facilities and service systems and the potential for the project to require the construction of new facilities. Mitigation measures will be identified to minimize significant impacts, as appropriate.

13. Transportation

The EIR will evaluate the project's transportation impacts pursuant to Senate Bill 743 and the City's Transportation Analysis Policy (Council Policy 5-1). The project's consistency with programs, plans, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulations system (including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities) will be discussed in the EIR. The project's impact on Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) will be discussed. It will include a Local Transportation Analysis (LTA) to determine the effects of the proposed project on key intersections within 0.5 miles of the site, as well as a transit delay analysis for San Carlos Street. Mitigation measures will be identified to minimize significant impacts, as appropriate.

14. Tribal Cultural Resources

The EIR will discuss the project's potential for impacts to tribal cultural resources under Assembly Bill 52.

15. Utilities

The EIR will examine the impacts of the project on public services, including utilities such as sanitary and storm drains, water supply, and solid waste management. Mitigation measures will be identified to minimize significant impacts, as appropriate.

16. Wildfire

The proposed project is located within a developed area of San José. The EIR will discuss project impacts on wildfire.

Additional Topics

In addition to the specified resource areas above, the EIR will also analyze and discuss project alternatives as well as significant and cumulative impacts. 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. Other alternatives that may be discussed could include a reduced demolition alternative, and/or a loading area redesign alternative. 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.

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

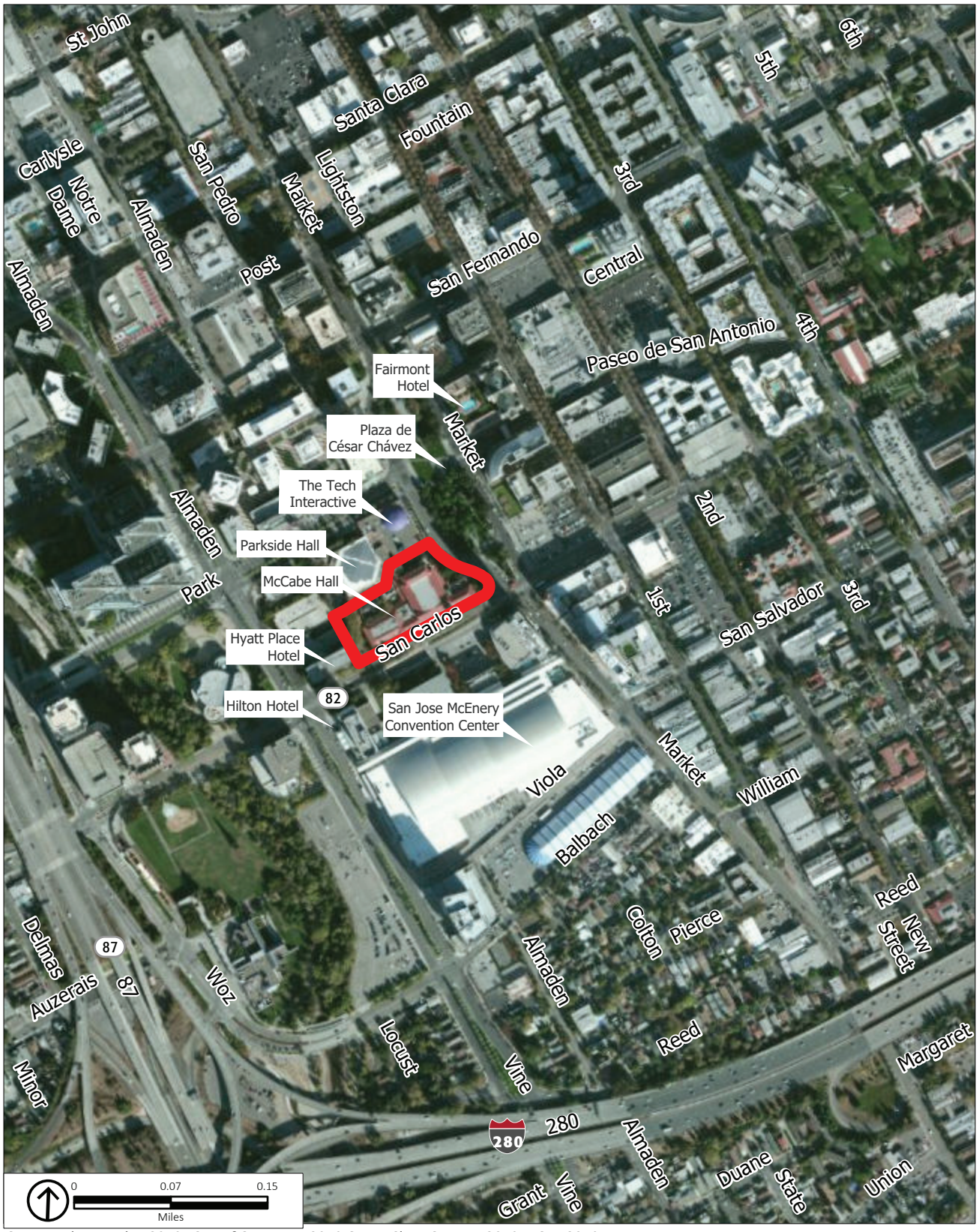
The EIR will include a Cumulative Impacts section that will address the potentially significant cumulative impacts of the project (particularly the cumulative traffic impacts) when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the development area.

In conformance with the CEQA Guidelines, the EIR will also include the following sections: 1) consistency with local and regional plans and policies, 2) growth inducing impacts, 3) significant irreversible environmental changes, 4) references and organizations/persons consulted, and 5) EIR authors.

Source: PlaceWorks, 2019; City of San Jose, 2019; Santa Clara County, 2019; ESRI 2019.

Project Site

Figure 1-1
Regional and Local Context



Source: PlaceWorks, 2019; City of San Jose; 2019 Santa Clara County, 2019; ESRI 2019

Project Site

Figure 1-2

Surrounding Setting

Source: els architecture + urban design, 2019.

Figure 1-3
Staging and Loading Area Plan