



# Recirculated Notice of Preparation Foster City General Plan Update and Climate Action Plan Draft Program Environmental Impact Report

**Date:** January 20, 2015

**Subject:** Recirculated Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report and Scoping Meeting for the Foster City General Plan Update and Climate Action Plan

**To:** State Clearinghouse  
State Responsible Agencies  
State Trustee Agencies  
Other Public Agencies  
Organizations and Interested Persons

**Lead Agency:** City of Foster City  
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**Reason for Recirculation:** The City initially circulated an NOP for the above referenced project for public comment on July 1, 2012 through August 3, 2012. The City also held a public scoping meeting on July 19, 2012. The City received one comment letter from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Since the initial circulation of the NOP, the project has been refined, including proposed changes to policies and programs in the Land Use and Circulation Element, proposed changes to the Land Use Map, and preparation of the Draft Climate Action Plan. The currently proposed changes to the Land Use Map include:

1. **Destination Park:** change from Waterfront Commercial to Park (Site A on Figure 1)
2. **Werder Park:** change from Open Space to Park (Site B on Figure 1)
3. **Elementary School (four sites):** change legend to School
4. **Study Areas:** eliminate two previously designated study areas, (1) Chess Drive Industrial and (2) Marina Site

Based on these changes, and the time that has elapsed since initial publication of the NOP, the City has determined that the NOP should be recirculated with the current project description as refined/modified. The project description is described in greater detail below.

**Notice of Preparation:** This is to notify public agencies and the general public that the City of Foster City, as the Lead Agency, will prepare an EIR for the Foster City General Plan Update and Climate Action Plan (“project” or “proposed project”). The City of Foster City is interested in the input and/or comments of public agencies and the general public as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to the agencies’ statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project, and public input. Comments that were provided on the initial NOP remain part of the administrative record for the Project and will be appropriately addressed in the EIR with any new comments that are received during the recirculated NOP public comment period; however, any agency or individual that provided comment on the initial NOP is free to provide new or additional comments.

**Comment Period:** Consistent with the time limits mandated by State law, your input, comments, or responses must be received in writing and sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than 5:00 p.m., February 19, 2015.

**Comments/Input:** Please send your comments/input (including name for a contact person in your agency) to: Attn: Curtis Banks, Community Development Director at the City of Foster City, 610 Foster City Boulevard, Foster City, CA 94404. Comments may also be sent via email to: [cbanks@fostercity.org](mailto:cbanks@fostercity.org).

**Scoping Meeting:** On February 19, 2015 the City of Foster City Planning Commission will conduct a public scoping meeting to solicit input and comments from public agencies and the general public on the proposed project and scope of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This meeting will be held in the City Council Chambers, 620 Foster City Boulevard, Foster City, California at 7:00 p.m.

## Project Characteristics

### Project Location and Setting

Foster City is located in San Mateo County, midway between San Francisco and San Jose on the western shoreline of the San Francisco Bay, east of U.S. 101, which provides convenient access to San Francisco and the San Francisco Airport to the north, and Santa Clara County and San Jose Airport to the south. The City is bisected by State Route 92 (the J. Arthur Younger Freeway), which runs between Half Moon Bay to the west and Hayward and Highway 880 to the east via the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge. State Route 92 provides convenient access to the East Bay.

The City encompasses 12,345 acres, of which 9,726 acres are part of San Francisco Bay and Belmont Slough, and 2,619 acres are reclaimed marshland. This equates to approximately 4 square miles of land area.

## **Study Area**

The study area for this EIR is all of the land and parcels within the incorporated City limits of Foster City, as shown in Figure 1.

## **Project Description**

The project to be analyzed in the EIR includes three inter-related components: (1) the proposed City of Foster General Plan Land Use and Circulation Element Update (2) an amendment to the City of Foster City General Plan Land Use Map and (3) a separate, stand-alone Climate Action Plan document. These components are collectively referred to as the “project” or “proposed project” and provide the basis for the environmental analysis. Each of these project components is described in greater detail below. Copies of the latest drafts of these components are available on the City’s website at: <http://tinyurl.com/LUCupdate>.

### **General Plan Land Use and Circulation Element Revisions**

The proposed Land Use and Circulation Element focuses on past, present and future development issues affecting Foster City. It establishes a pattern for land use and sets out clear standards for the density of population and the intensity of development for each of the proposed land uses. The Element establishes a direct tie between the timing, amount, type and location of development with the traffic, service and infrastructure demands such development will generate.

These portions of the plan, and principally the Land Use section, bring together all land use issues, constraints and opportunities, balanced with the numerous needs and desires of the community. The proposed Land Use and Circulation Element includes policies and programs affecting both development and redevelopment of land in Foster City.

The proposed Land Use and Circulation Element also relates to many issues addressed in other parts of the General Plan. Among these are the preservation of open space, the provision of affordable housing, the conservation of natural resources, the control of noise, and the protection of life and property from natural or human hazards.

This chapter is a major revision of the 1993 Land Use and Circulation Element of the Foster City General Plan. Many of the development projects now completed or under construction were envisioned at the time the 1993 Land Use and Circulation Element was adopted. However, there have been some changes in the specific mix of housing and commercial building types in several large scale master-planned projects, notably the Pilgrim/Triton and Chess/Hatch areas, and the vacant land adjacent to the Civic Center.

The revised Land Use and Circulation Element includes numerous revisions to existing goals, policies, and implementation measures contained in the 1993 General Plan, as well as new goals, policies, and implementation measures. Tables have been provided on the City’s website (<http://tinyurl.com/LUCupdate>) that depict the proposed changes to the goals, policies and programs of the Land Use and Circulation Element.

## General Plan Land Use Map Revisions

The General Plan Land Use Map identifies land use designations for each parcel within the city. The project proposes four changes to the General Plan Land Use Map:

5. **Destination Park:** change from Waterfront Commercial to Park (Site A on Figure 1)
6. **Werder Park:** change from Open Space to Park (Site B on Figure 1)
7. **Elementary School (four sites):** change legend to School
8. **Study Areas:** eliminate two previously designated study areas, (1) Chess Drive Industrial and (2) Marina Site

The proposed General Plan Land Use Map is attached as Figure 1.

## Climate Action Plan

The City of Foster City has developed the Climate Action Plan to address challenges that climate change will bring to the community. Climate scientists around the world, represented by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), have acknowledged that, through release of greenhouse gases (GHG), human activity is causing climate shifts. Although climate change is an issue of global concern, effects will be felt locally and so the City has begun taking steps to face associated problems. The Climate Action Plan describes climate change effects and prescribes measures to mitigate negative impacts. By addressing potential issues arising from climate change impacts, the City will better adapt to changing conditions and can protect general community welfare.

Forecasts for GHG emissions into 2020, 2025, and 2050 reveal a large increase in greenhouse gases if no action is taken, but State laws have set GHG reduction targets as part of a greenhouse gas reduction plan. Local governments have also sought to adopt reasonable targets for greenhouse gas reductions based on goals set forth by the State. The Foster City City Council is considering the establishment of the following GHG reduction targets: achieve 15 percent GHG emissions reduction below 2005 levels by 2020, 20 percent below 2005 levels by 2025, and 80 percent below 2005 levels by 2050.

In order to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets, the Climate Action Plan contains a variety of measures to address emissions from different sectors. Many measures have been based on policies proposed over time from sources such as the Sustainability Action Plan, the General Plan, and the Sustainable Foster City Plan. Thus, the Climate Action Plan contains a refined collection of ideas that have been developed from a variety of sources to meet current projected GHG reduction needs.

The measures in the Climate Action Plan are broadly grouped into seven categories:

- **Energy (Community):** energy efficiency upgrades to residential and commercial buildings through code adoption, funding programs, and urban forestation programs

- Energy (Municipal): energy efficiency upgrades and improvements by the City through revised building standards, solar systems, purchase of environmentally-friendly materials, and leveraging of funds.
- Transportation and Land Use (Community): policies in the General Plan that reduce automobile trips through compact and more efficient land use patterns that promote a balanced mix of land uses, encourage alternative modes of transportation, and encourage use of hybrid and electric cars.
- Transportation-Related Municipal Operations: policies that promote energy efficiency in the City fleet and promote telecommuting and flexible work schedules to reduce vehicle trips.
- Waste (Community): waste diversion from landfills to reduce the generation of methane and other greenhouse gases.
- Energy and Water: energy reduction in the heating and usage of water.
- Education: programs to increase awareness of conservation, sustainability, and the Climate Action Plan

Chapter 4 of the Climate Action Plan presents all measures with background information, a description, cost and financial impacts, implementation process, and calculation assumptions for GHG reductions.

The Climate Action Plan recommends measures that are compatible with the proposed General Plan Land Use and Circulation Element, which means that the GHG reduction measures in the plan will tie into new development projects as well as existing development and municipal and community activities. The Climate Action Plan, as a programmatic tiering document under CEQA, will also serve as a tool for greenhouse gas analysis and mitigation review for new projects. It will help guide future planning, development, and municipal policy decisions. Chapter 5 of the Climate Action Plan discusses implementation, monitoring, implementation measures, implementation timeline, and potential funding sources.

## Project Objectives

The project is intended to reflect the desires and vision of Foster City's residents, businesses, and decision-makers for the future development and operation of the City. Historically, Foster City has been committed to continuing the land use pattern envisioned in the original 1961 Master Plan, and maintaining the design qualities, appearance, and scale of its residential neighborhoods and commercial areas. Similarly, the Climate Action Plan is intended to reflect the desires of the City's residents, businesses, and decision-makers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to address climate change issues to serve both the local community and the global population. In this regard, the primary objectives of the project are to:

- Update the Land Use and Circulation Element to eliminate goals, policies, and programs that are no longer relevant and ensure the Element reflects goals, policies, and

programs needed to guide the development and growth of the City while maintaining and enhancing the quality of life of the citizens through 2025.

- Provide methods for reducing Foster City’s greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the direction of the State of California through the Global Warming Solutions Action (AB 32), Governor’s Order S-03-05, and Public Resources Code Section 21083.3.
- Create a programmatic tiering document that addresses the elements identified under CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5(b)(1).
- Address new requirements of State law.

## **Program EIR Analysis**

The City, as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will prepare a Program Environmental Impact Report for the Foster City General Plan Update and Climate Action Plan (project). The EIR will be prepared in accordance with CEQA, implementing the CEQA Guidelines (Guidelines), relevant case law, and City procedures. The General Plan Update and Climate Action Plan is considered a “project” under CEQA, and is therefore subject to CEQA review. As policy documents, the General Plan and Climate Action Plan provide guidance and sets standards for several areas of mandatory environmental review for later “projects” that would be undertaken by local government and the private sector.

The EIR will analyze potentially significant cumulative impacts associated with adoption and implementation of the General Plan Update and the Climate Action Plan. As shown on Figure 1, there are very minor land use changes proposed to the City’s Land Use Map. None of the proposed changes would result in an increase in development potential or development intensity within the City. Additionally, approval of the project would not entitle or otherwise directly or indirectly approve or facilitate new development within the City. As such, there is no potential for environmental impacts to occur in the near-term as a result of project approval. The analysis in the Draft EIR will focus on the potential impacts associated with buildout of the Foster City General Plan through 2025. The Draft EIR will include a description of existing baseline environmental conditions relative to each environmental topic contemplated under CEQA, and will include an analysis of potential impacts under cumulative conditions associated with buildout of the General Plan and implementation of the Climate Action Plan.

Pursuant to Section 15063(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, no Initial Study will be prepared for the proposed project. The EIR will evaluate the full range of environmental issues contemplated under CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, with the exception of Agricultural and Forest Resources and Mineral Resources. There are no agricultural or forest lands located within the City of Foster City. Additionally, there are no known significant deposits of mineral resources located within Foster City. As such, there is no potential for the proposed project to impact these types of resources, and these environmental topics will not be addressed in the Draft EIR.

At this time, the City anticipates that Draft EIR sections will be organized in the following manner:

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Population
- Noise
- Public Services and Utilities
- Transportation and Circulation
- Aesthetics and Visual Resources
- Mandatory Findings of Significance/Cumulative Impacts
- Alternatives

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**Land Use Designation**

- |                            |                                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Single Family Residential  | Parks and Recreation            |
| Two Family Residential     | Research/Office Park            |
| Apartment Residential      | Chess/Hatch Office Research     |
| Apartment/Neighborhood Com | Public and Semi Public          |
| Neighborhood Com           | Service Commercial              |
| Condominium Residential    | Service Commercial with Housing |
| Townhouse Residential      | Town Center Commercial          |
| School                     | Civic Center Mixed Use          |
| Light Industrial           | Waterfront Commercial           |
| Open Space                 |                                 |

Proposed Map Changes

- A: Change from Waterfront Commercial to Park
- B: Change from Open Space to Park

**Figure 1: Proposed General Plan Land Use Map**

