

## 3 Environmental Setting

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This section provides a general overview of the environmental setting for the proposed Specific Plan. More detailed descriptions of the environmental setting for each environmental issue area can be found in Section 4, *Environmental Impact Analysis*.

### 3.1 Regional Setting

The Specific Plan Area is located in San Leandro, in the East Bay region of the San Francisco Bay Area. Figure 2 in Section 2, *Project Description*, shows the location of the Specific Plan Area in the region. The East Bay consists of 33 cities in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. More than one-third of the Bay Area's population resides in the East Bay. In 2016, the East Bay was home to 1.1 million jobs and 2.7 million residents. San Leandro is the fifth largest city in Alameda County in population, following Oakland, Fremont, Hayward, and Berkeley. San Leandro is located 8 miles south of Downtown Oakland, 15 miles southeast of San Francisco, and 30 miles north of San Jose. It is bounded on the north by Oakland and on the south by the unincorporated communities of San Lorenzo and Ashland. The western edge of San Leandro is defined by San Francisco Bay, while the East Bay hills define the eastern edge (City of San Leandro 2016i).

San Leandro is located in the San Francisco Bay Hydrologic Region. Drainage is generally to the west towards the San Francisco Bay. San Leandro is within the seismically active region of the San Andreas Fault Zone.

San Leandro enjoys a mild climate characterized by cool winters and moderate summers. According to the Western Regional Climate Center, in Oakland (the closest data to San Leandro) average temperatures range from about 64 degrees F in summer to 50 degrees F in winter. Annual rainfall averages about 18 inches per year, with most rainfall occurring between October and April (Western Regional Climate Center, 2009).

### 3.2 Project Site Setting

As shown in Figure 3 in Section 2, *Project Description*, the Specific Plan Area is at the eastern edge of San Leandro, adjacent to unincorporated Alameda County. It includes the Bay Fair BART Station, Bayfair Center, East 14th street and Hesperian Boulevard corridors, and a small amount of residential neighborhoods. The Specific Plan Area is surrounded in most directions by single-family neighborhoods.

The Specific Plan Area has a total acreage of 154 acres, with a majority of its land designated towards retail and commercial uses. The remaining portion contains a mix of uses including office, light industrial, and residential. The study area has different sub areas (e.g. Bay Fair BART Station, Bayfair Center, Fashion Faire Place, and Fairmont Square shopping center), which are divided by two intersecting corridors (East 14th Street and Hesperian Boulevard).

Major arterials providing immediate access to the Specific Plan Area include Interstates 880, 580, and 238. The Specific Plan Area is also served by the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) rail system. The Bay Fair BART station is located in the southern corner of the Specific Plan Area. The Specific Plan

Area is almost entirely built out with retail and residential uses and is relatively flat with elevations ranging from 35 to 45 feet above mean sea level.

### 3.3 Cumulative Development

CEQA defines cumulative impacts as two or more individual actions that, when considered together, are considerable or will compound other environmental impacts. Cumulative impacts are the changes in the environment that result from the incremental impact of development of the proposed project and other nearby projects. For example, traffic impacts of two nearby projects may be insignificant when analyzed separately, but could have a significant impact when analyzed together. Cumulative impacts analysis provides a reasonable forecast of future environmental conditions and can more accurately gauge the effects of a series of projects.

The Specific Plan Area is within the City of San Leandro. The cumulative impacts analysis for this EIR is based on the City's 2035 General Plan, adopted in September 2016 (and incorporated herein by reference), and its Final Environmental Impact Report (certified in September 2016). The 2035 General Plan plans for up to 5,370 new housing units (4,645 multi-family units and 725 single family units) and a population increase of 14,790 by 2035. The 2035 General Plan accounts for TOD development within the Specific Plan and the 2035 General Plan EIR assumed 1,100 new housing units and 773 new jobs in the Specific Plan Area. Therefore, development under the Specific Plan could exceed the growth projections assumed under the 2035 General Plan. Development under the proposed Specific Plan in conjunction with development under the 2035 General Plan is accounted for in the cumulative impacts analysis.

The Specific Plan Area is located geographically in the southeastern corner of San Leandro; however, cumulative development as considered in this EIR is generally spread throughout San Leandro. Some cumulative impacts are not necessarily significant in relation to development that occurs further from the Specific Plan Area. For example, aesthetic and noise impacts associated with the Specific Plan are not likely to be detected in the northern part of San Leandro, but may be detected in the adjacent residential neighborhoods in southeastern San Leandro and in the Alameda County unincorporated community of Ashland. Selected cumulative impact discussions, such as land use and geology and soils, rely on a smaller geographic area: these are noted as appropriate. Some cumulative impact discussions, such as air quality, rely on much larger geographic areas such as the Bay Area region. These are noted as appropriate. Unless otherwise noted, cumulative development includes all development within San Leandro anticipated by the 2035 General Plan.

## 4 Environmental Impact Analysis

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This section discusses the possible environmental effects of the proposed Specific Plan for the specific issue areas that were identified by the City, expert consultation, and NOP responses as having the potential to experience significant impacts. “Significant effect” is defined by the *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15382 as:

“...a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment, but may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.”

The assessment of each issue area begins with a discussion of the environmental setting related to the issue, which is followed by the impact analysis. In the impact analysis, the first subsection identifies the methodologies used and the “significance thresholds,” which are those criteria adopted by the City and other agencies, universally recognized, or developed specifically for this analysis to determine whether potential effects are significant. The next subsection describes each impact of the proposed project, mitigation measures for significant impacts, and the level of significance after mitigation. Each effect under consideration for an issue area is separately listed in bold text with the discussion of the effect and its significance. Each bolded impact statement also contains a statement of the significance determination for the environmental impact as follows:

**Significant and Unavoidable.** An impact that cannot be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires a Statement of Overriding Considerations to be issued if the project is approved per *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15093.

**Significant but Mitigable.** An impact that can be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires findings under *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15091.

**Less than Significant.** An impact that may be adverse, but does not exceed the threshold levels and does not require mitigation measures.

**Beneficial.** An effect that would reduce existing environmental problems or hazards.

**No Impact.** A finding of no impact is made when the analysis concludes that the proposed project would not affect the particular environmental resource or issue.

Following each environmental impact discussion is a list of mitigation measures (if required) and the residual effects or level of significance remaining after implementation of the measure(s). In cases where the mitigation measure for an impact could have a significant environmental impact in another issue area, this impact is discussed and evaluated as a secondary impact. The impact analysis concludes with a discussion of cumulative effects, which evaluates the impacts associated with the proposed project in conjunction with other planned and pending developments in the area listed in Section 3, *Environmental Setting*.

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