

Summaries of Key Background Studies for the update to Moffett Park Specific Plan

The following background studies have played a key role in helping to define the recommended land use plan to study. The following summaries provide context to the existing conditions of Moffett Park and expected changes due to climate change and the economy.

Sea Level Rise Adaptation Strategy

The San Francisco Estuary Institute as part of the Moffett Park Specific Plan Update consultant team prepared a preliminary Sea Level Rise Adaptation Strategy and Technical Study (November 2020). As the Moffett Park Specific Plan Area (Plan Area) covers nearly all the area of the city that is exposed to increasing flood hazards with sea-level rise, the adaptation strategy also serves the city as a whole. Although key city infrastructure such as the Water Pollution Control Plant and the Sunnyvale Materials Recovery and Transfer Station solid waste processing facility, are just outside the Plan Area; their adaptation to sea-level rise should be considered with the Moffett Park strategy.

The adaptation strategy focuses on the adaption process for up to three feet of sea-level rise, which is considered likely by the end of the 21st century. Greater amounts of sea-level rise are projected to have a less likely chance of occurring in this century but become increasingly likely in the next century. Addressing sea-level rise beyond three feet will require additional planning and adaptation. The study builds on prior efforts by the Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the City that identified areas vulnerable to sea level rise. The study has is informed by the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project and the Sunnyvale Shoreline Resilience Vision.

Based on these agencies and sources, this study recommends the series of measures (show in in the study as Table 1) that together create a “City Adaptation Strategy for Sea-Level Rise”. Implementation of these measures will provide Moffett Park with improved flood protection for up to three feet of sea-level rise. More than three feet of sea-level rise is not projected to occur until about 2070 at the earliest, so this strategy is likely to afford 50 years of implemented protection. The strategy does include future long-term adaptation planning, to initiate the process for assessing and adapting to greater than three feet of sea-level rise.

Urban Ecology and Open Space Strategy

Moffett Park has the potential to set a precedent for the ecologically friendly redevelopment of office parks. By integrating nature throughout the urban landscape, Moffett Park can become a truly livable district for people, native plants, and animals. Building ecologically complex and biodiverse spaces will provide a multitude of benefits for the people that live and work in Moffett Park. Biodiverse spaces will improve outdoor thermal comfort; promote active mobility; reduce stormwater runoff, pollution and noise

sequester carbon; and lower cooling costs through direct shading of buildings.

Improving people's everyday access and contact with nature can also confer a variety of physical and psychological health benefits. Innovative use of regulatory and incentive structures can encourage the integration of nature and ecology throughout the district. Property owners in Moffett Park have already shown interest in ecological master planning that can be integrated into a coordinated strategy to address problems that are multifaceted and require a holistic and collaborative effort. Following the example that Moffett Park sets, office parks across the Bay Area can together transform the landscape into one that is vastly more habitable for people and native wildlife as they redevelop.

The Urban Ecology and Open Space Strategy includes three main goals to achieve the transformation envisioned. These three goals focus on:

- the creation of new green spaces that serve multiple purposes including flood protection and retention, habitat, and reduced heat island effects,
- the expansion of wetland areas and terrestrial setbacks to provide both biotic and flooding benefits,
- and the introduction of eco-patches to help link the larger ecological areas and to create a network of green for people, native plants, and animals.

The strategy under these goals will help create much needed flood protection and retention, comprehensive tree canopy cover, habitat diversity, native vegetation, and an improved human experience in the plan area.

Market Study

Strategic Economics prepared a Moffett Park Market Study (June 2020). The Moffett Park Market Study provides an overview of real estate market conditions and trends in the region, Sunnyvale, and the Moffett Park Specific Plan area. The analysis includes a summary of the current supply and estimated demand for housing, office, industrial, retail, and hotel uses. The study helped to identify the relationship between the existing uses in the plan area (office and industrial) and how new proposed uses (housing, retail and services) would need to work in concert with one another. This information informs the location and intensity of all the uses proposed in the draft land use plan.

Key findings of the Market Study by sector:

Housing

Over the next 20 years Sunnyvale could potentially capture demand for at least 21,000 additional housing units. Strong demand exists for multi-family housing units in Sunnyvale. This demand is reflected by high apartment rental rates and condominium

sales prices. Sunnyvale is falling far short of meeting its 2023 targets for adding housing affordable to lower income households, even as the city is on track to exceed its 2023 housing production target for housing affordable to “above moderate income” households.

Office

Demand for office space in Sunnyvale and neighboring cities of Mountain View, Santa Clara, and San Jose is estimated at between 11 million and 31 million square feet from now until 2040, depending on the pace of job growth and tech firm expansions in Silicon Valley. The Moffett Park plan area is well-positioned to compete for a substantial share of the market area’s future demand, given the plan area’s location in Sunnyvale, transportation connections, and development interest from several major property owners. Development in Moffett Park will require continued concerted investment efforts by major property owners since the plan area also requires major investments in transportation and other infrastructure to support higher employment densities.

Industrial

Demand exists for light industrial and flex space in the market area and Sunnyvale, but inventory is declining as many R&D and industrial parks are redeveloped into other uses. However, the inventory of lower cost spaces that are suitable for these types of firms is declining as these buildings are redeveloped into other higher intensity uses, including office, residential, and mixed-use developments

Retail

Future households and existing and new workers in the Moffett Park plan area will generate demand for new neighborhood-serving retail such as grocery stores, personal services, and restaurants. Demand for retail space in the Moffett Park plan area will largely depend on the number of future housing units added to the area.

Hotel

Driven by rapid employment growth and business activity in Santa Clara County, demand for hotels in Santa Clara County and Sunnyvale grew significantly over the past decade. In the short term, there are multiple hotel projects in the pipeline to absorb demand, although hotel development activity is likely to largely cease until travel activity recovers from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the long term, the Moffett Park plan area can attract new hotel development as travel activity resumes and demand grows, especially for business travelers.