



San Francisco Overlook Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) Summary

On May 2nd, 2012, the San Francisco Planning Department released the 508-page Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the San Francisco Overlook Development Residential Project. Over the last several years, the Planning Department has commissioned, reviewed, and compiled studies prepared by many different environmental experts, including biologists, traffic engineers, geotechnical and geological engineers into this comprehensive document to assess the project's environmental impacts as defined by the established standards of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The San Francisco Planning Commission will hear public comment about this DEIR and the proposed project at a hearing on June 14, 2012 as part of the mandated 45-day public comment period which runs until 5pm on June 19, 2012.

The key finding of this DEIR is *San Francisco Overlook results in no significant environmental impacts* once all required mitigation measures are implemented. Mitigation measures stipulate hillside stability improvements and a number of other required pre-construction, construction, and ongoing maintenance protocols designed to reduce this project's environmental impact to less-than-significant levels. San Francisco Overlook has certified in writing they will perform all of these measures as a condition of project approval.

Project description and summary of some of the key findings of the San Francisco Overlook DEIR:

San Francisco Overlook is a proposed residential development project for the construction of 34 family dwelling units (65,750 total square feet of residential space) and a new paved 20-foot-wide by approximately 700-foot-long private street (13,950 square feet). The project site is located in San Francisco's Mount Sutro/Forest Knolls/Clarendon Heights neighborhood on the northwest slope of Mount Sutro. Twenty-four of the project's units would be located within 12 duplex buildings--each building with a two-story upper unit over a two-story lower unit and dedicated garage parking of 1-2 cars per unit. The remainder of the units are located in a ten townhome building over covered resident and guest parking.

Approximately 45,390 square feet of the project site would be developed with the new residential buildings, a new paved street and sidewalk, a community parklet, and an emergency vehicle turnaround area at the west end of the site. The remaining 18,500 square feet of the project site would be left undeveloped save for some hillside stabilization measures.

Other notable areas of discussion include land use, aesthetics, transportation/emergency access, air quality/greenhouse gas emissions, and construction noise.

Geology and Soils (Hillside)

- The implementation of the mitigation measures discussed in the DEIR will ensure optimum hillside stability for San Francisco Overlook and its neighbors. These requirements include sophisticated construction techniques designed to reinforce seismic safety and prevent landslides--including drainage and erosion control, construction of deep drilled pier foundations

(no pile driving), recompaction of existing fill, and erosion-resistant vegetation, among other measures. The final scope of these improvements will be reassessed and reviewed by the city and other independent experts prior to permit issuance and construction to ensure the highest level of safety.

- Based on the findings of the DEIR and the required mitigation measures described above, the hillside will be more stable after completion of San Francisco Overlook than it is currently.

Transportation/Emergency Access

- The DEIR concluded that the proposed project would not result in significant adverse transportation impacts, including traffic volume and parking availability.
- San Francisco Overlook would not significantly affect emergency access to the proposed project or the surrounding neighborhood.

Noise

- Construction of the proposed project would not generate excessive vibration or noise levels that violate City code requirements.
- Mitigation measures such as the use of low noise generating equipment and prohibiting construction vehicle traffic earlier than 7am will help ensure reduced noise impacts to the surrounding neighborhood during construction. The DEIR also recommends designating a “noise disturbance coordinator” who will be responsible for any local input on construction noise.

Flora & Fauna

- The DEIR found no evidence and low likelihood of any protected species habitats on the project site.
- Further site monitoring by an independent biologist shall be conducted during bird nesting season (Feb-July) and construction activities shall not progress if bird nests are present.

Land Use/Planning/Aesthetics

- The project would not divide the surrounding established community, nor would it have a substantial impact on the existing character of the vicinity.
- The project will not have a substantial impact on scenic vistas or impact any of the visual character to the area.

Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Water Quality

- Mitigation measures will ensure that construction air quality emissions are reduced to a lower percentage than what is required by the City – with no effect to the area as a result.
- The project would be consistent with the City’s GHC Reduction plan and would therefore not result in considerable greenhouse gas emissions.
- San Francisco Overlook will comply with water quality standards and waste discharge requirements.

Frequently Asked Questions

The DEIR keeps referring to items as having a “less-than-significant impact.” What does that mean and who decides if an impact is significant?

As defined in our DEIR, a significant impact is “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project”. The San Francisco Planning Department, following guidelines set by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), determines the criteria by which any specific change brought about by our project would be considered a “significant” or “less-than-significant” impact. With the adoption of a few identified mitigation measures, the DEIR confirms that ALL of the environmental impacts of San Francisco Overlook are less-than-significant.

What are Mitigation Measures?

Mitigation Measures are specific requirements detailed in the DEIR to reduce potentially significant impacts to less-than-significant levels. For San Francisco Overlook this includes providing new hillside drainage and stabilization improvements, monitoring of local wildlife habitats, controlling construction emissions, etc. With these measures in place, the impacts in these areas are reduced to less-than-significant levels.

What assurance do we have that San Francisco Overlook is going to implement these mitigation measures?

As a condition of approval, San Francisco Overlook is legally bound by the City and County of San Francisco to fully implement all mitigation measures detailed in the DEIR. Furthermore, prior to issuance of our building permit, an additional round of detailed engineering review of the final design will be conducted by an independent panel of experts, whose further recommendations (if any) shall also bind SF Overlook.

The DEIR mentions a project alternative with only 16 single family homes – is this being considered?

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires as a matter of process the discussion and review of alternate project options to identify an environmentally superior project alternative. While any smaller-scale development inevitably creates somewhat less disturbance, this option ultimately was shown to have similar types of impacts as the project we've proposed. Ultimately, the fact that San Francisco Overlook has no significant environmental impacts means that neither we nor the city is obligated to pursue these alternatives. Furthermore, we do not see that building 16 mega homes, is in keeping with the context and character of our neighborhood nor helps San Francisco's broader need for reasonably attainable family homes.

The full DEIR is available online at http://sfmea.sfplanning.org/2004.0093E_DEIR.pdf. Contact planner Irene Nishimura at (415) 575-9041 or irene.nishimura@sfgov.org to request CD-ROM and hardcopy versions.

For more information about the project please contact info@sfoverlook.com or go to www.sfoverlook.com.