3. **Project Description**

Tharaldson Hospitality Development, the project applicant (applicant), is proposing the Hilton Garden Inn (herein referred to as the “proposed project”). The proposed project would involve demolishing the existing two City-owned buildings and redeveloping the project site with a hotel development on 2.26 acres covering two parcels located at 470-490 Lawrence Way. The proposed project would consist of a four-story hotel with 124 guest rooms, 113 on-site parking spaces at grade, on-site guest amenities and landscaping. This chapter provides a description of the proposed project, including the location, setting, and characteristics of the project site, a construction schedule, and required permits and approvals. The environmental setting by topic area is included in Chapter 4, Environmental Checklist and Findings, of this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND).

### 3.1 PROJECT SITE LOCATION AND SITE CHARACTERISTICS

#### 3.1.1 REGIONAL AND LOCAL LOCATION

The project site is located in the central portion of the City of Walnut Creek in Contra Costa County. Walnut Creek is bordered by the City of Concord to the north, unincorporated Contra Costa County to the east and south, and the City of Lafayette to the west. Regional access to the project site is provided via Interstate 680 (I-680), which is a six-lane freeway to the west of the project site. Access to the project site from I-680 is provided from the eastbound Ygnacio Valley Road exit and the westbound North Main Street exit. Local access to the project site is provided by Lawrence Way. The project site is located approximately 26 miles east of Oakland International Airport (OAK) via Interstate 880 (I-880) and California Highway 24 (CA-24). Buchanan Field Airport is located approximately 6 miles to the north of the project site. The project site is located 0.5 miles northeast of the Walnut Creek Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) station, and is 1 mile south of the Pleasant Hill Centre BART station\(^1\) (see Figure 3-1).

The project site is located at the southwest corner of Lawrence Way and Penniman Way. Lawrence Way is a two-lane roadway in a one-way configuration, with traffic running in a northbound direction. Penniman Way is a two-lane east-west roadway connecting North Main Street and Lawrence Way and an on-ramp for northbound I-680. The project site is located between car dealer parking to the south and commercial buildings to the west, Lawrence Way and BART tracks to the east, and Penniman Way and I-680 to the north. Nearby land uses include auto dealerships, hotel and fast-food uses along Lawrence Way and North Main Street. The project site is bound by existing sidewalks on Lawrence Way and North Main Street. The Lawrence Way/North Main Street intersection is un-signalized with pedestrian crosswalks (see Figure 3-2).

\(^1\) Google, Google Earth, accessed November 16, 2017.
Regional Location

Source: City of Walnut Creek, 2017; Placeworks, 2017.

Project Site

Figure 3-1
Regional Location
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Figure 3-2
Aerial View of Project Site and Surroundings

Source: Google Earth, Image Date: 3-11-2017; PlaceWorks 2017.
3.1.2 **EXISTING SITE CHARACTER**

As shown on Figure 3-2, the project site includes two parcels, covering a total area of 2.26 acres, and is currently developed with surface parking and two structures, which are currently occupied and used for City administrative purposes. Additionally, the City temporarily leases approximately 12,000 square feet of area in the southern portion of the project site to an adjacent car dealer for automobile inventory storage. The existing structures were constructed sometime between 1946 and 1958 and the site served as a storage yard.² Prior to its current use for the City of Walnut Creek traffic operations, City Impound Yard, and City recycling drop-off center, the site was occupied by a medical laboratory. The topography of the project site is relatively flat, approximately 120 feet above mean sea level. The project site includes 15 trees of varying species and sizes located around the perimeter of the project site (see Figure 3-3).

3.1.3 **GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING DESIGNATION**

3.1.3.1 **GENERAL PLAN**

The project site consists of two parcels assigned Assessor’s Parcel Numbers (APN’s) 173-121-046 and -047. The City of Walnut Creek 2025 General Plan designates the project site as Auto Sales & Service (AS), a land use designation intended primarily for auto-related and auto-oriented uses. Uses in this land use designation generally include auto dealers, auto service and repair uses. Businesses not associated with auto sales, service, or repair are allowed only if they demonstrate their presence will have no adverse effect on the long-term viability of the AS designation.³ The project is consistent with the existing land use category, such that the project requires no change to the General Plan designation. Further, the project observes the Moderate General Plan (15 foot average) setback requirement along the Lawrence Way frontage. The project area is oddly shaped and predominantly surrounded on two sides by roadways that serve primarily as freeway on and or off ramps. The site is not an integral part of the larger, multi-parcel block of properties to the west that front along North Main Street that share the same Auto Sales and Service designation in the General Plan and zoning. With the exception to providing a small area for offsite storage of vehicles, the property has long been used by the City for uses such as recycling, equipment storage and other corporation yard needs including the Traffic Operations Center (TOC).

3.1.3.2 **ZONING**

The project site has a zoning designation of Auto Sales & Service (A-S). This Zoning District is intended to provide a distinct commercial district which reserves land area primarily for auto dealers, auto service and other related auto oriented retail uses. The A-S zoning designation has a maximum building height of

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² Site Investigation Work Plan: 470, 480, 490 Lawrence Way Properties Walnut Creek, California. The Source Group, June 29, 2015, page 2-3.
35 feet\(^4\) and a maximum floor area ratio\(^5\) (FAR) of 1.0 and does not require a minimum setback on any lot lines.\(^6\)

### 3.2 PROPOSED PROJECT COMPONENTS

As previously stated, the proposed project requires demolishing the existing 8,488-square-foot commercial building and redeveloping the project site with a new 72,964-square-foot, 124-room hotel. The total building footprint coverage would be approximately 19,555 square feet. The proposed project would consist of a four-story hotel with on-site landscaping and guest amenities, and 113 on-site surface parking spaces fronting Lawrence Way. Detailed project plans referenced in this document are included in Appendix A, Concept Design Plans, of this IS/MND.

Approval of the proposed project requires rezoning the site to Planned Development (P-D) that would facilitate redevelopment of the project site with a hotel use. The following provides a detailed description of the key project components.

#### 3.2.1 REZONING

The proposed project includes a change from the existing A-S zoning district to a P-D zoning designation. The purpose of the P-D district is to allow flexibility in the City’s conventional zoning requirements that support innovative building techniques and site planning, while maintaining compliance with the adopted General Plan and applicable public health, safety and welfare standards. P-D zoning may be applied to any parcel within the city with the submittal of a complete application including a preliminary site plan and proposed land use regulations. The City Council will consider the Rezoning Application following a recommendation by the Planning Commission, and a review by the Design Review Commission. Upon approval of the P-D designation, the project site would be subject to the development standards stated in the application and final Design Review approval by the Design Review Commission.\(^7\)

#### 3.2.2 HOTEL

The proposed project site plan is shown on Figure 3-3. The proposed project would develop a four-story short-term-stay hotel with approximately 72,964 square feet of building area and up to 124 guest rooms. The ground (first) floor of the hotel would include the lobby, lounge, dining room, buffet space, bar, kitchen, two meeting rooms, fitness center, sales office, employee lounge, laundry room, offices, 10 guest rooms, and electrical, mechanical, and storage spaces, as well as access to the outdoor pool and hot tub.

\(^4\) The 35-foot maximum height permitted is consistent with the maximum height allowed under the Building Height Freeze Initiative of 1985, commonly known as ‘Measure A’.

\(^5\) The floor area ratio (FAR) is the ratio of the gross floor area of all buildings on a lot to the net lot area of the property.

\(^6\) City of Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Title 10, Zoning, Chapter 10-2.2.1002, Automobile Sales and Service District, Land Use Regulations.

\(^7\) City of Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Title 10, Zoning, Article 17, Planned Development District (P-D).
area. The outdoor pool and hot tub would be located adjacent to the northwest corner of the hotel, screened from the Lawrence Way frontage by a fence and landscaping. The second, third and fourth floors would each include thirty eight (38) guest rooms, storage and linen spaces, telecommunications room, and elevator lobby. Hotel meeting rooms would accommodate approximately 30 people each and are intended for small conference venues. Guest rooms would be structured as follows: 60 king bed rooms including 3 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant king beds, and 64 double queen rooms, including 4 ADA double queen beds. Floor plans are shown on Sheet Number (No.) DR2.1 through Sheet
Conceptual Site Plan
No. DR2.3 in Appendix A of this IS/MND. The proposed project includes a FAR\(^8\) of 0.76, and as shown on Figure 3-4, the overall building height, including any sign and design facades, would not exceed 35 feet to the top of the roof line from the existing lowest on-site grade, with up to 12 feet of additional height afforded for mechanical and other equipment, as permitted by the Zoning Ordinance. Perspective views of the site are shown on Sheet No. DR3.1 through Sheet No. DR3.2 in Appendix A of this IS/MND.

The project applicant estimates that the operation of the proposed hotel would generate approximately 17 employees, who would be on-site during three 8-hour shifts over a period of 24 hours. Between 12 to 14 employees would be on-site between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., and between 1 and 3 employees would be on-site between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. With an average of two guests per hotel room, the hotel could generate up to 248 guests at maximum capacity.

### 3.2.3 ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

As shown on Figure 3-3 above, project site access, including emergency vehicles and bicycles, would be provided from two existing driveways on Lawrence Way. The drive aisle would extend around the front of the building to the loading zone on the southwest portion of the project site.

Pedestrian facilities typically include sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signal phases, curb ramps, curb extensions, and various streetscape amenities such as lighting, and benches. In general, a network of sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and curb ramps provide access for pedestrians in the vicinity of the proposed project site. Specifically, pedestrian access to the project site would be via a sidewalk on Lawrence Way.

There is a Class I\(^9\) facility that is part of the Iron Horse Trail bicycle network and runs on North California Boulevard. In the project vicinity Class III\(^10\) routes are signed along Ygnacio Valley Road south of the project site.\(^11\)

Transit access is provided by County Connection and BART. Several County Connection Routes are located within walking distance (i.e., \(\frac{1}{4}\)-mile) of the project site. The bus stops at North Main Street/Parkside Drive and North Civic Drive/Parkside Drive serve the project site. The routes that serve these bus stops are as follows:

- **Route 9** is a local route that operates between Diablo Valley College and the Walnut Creek BART station. The route operates weekdays from 5:50 a.m. to 10:10 p.m. at varying headways between 55 and 40 minutes.

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\(^8\) The FAR is the ratio of the gross floor area of all buildings on a lot to the area of the lot.

\(^9\) Class I Multi-Use Path – a completely separated right-of-way for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians with cross flows of motorized traffic minimized.

\(^10\) Class III Bike Route – signing only for shared use with motor vehicles within the same travel lane on a street or highway.

\(^11\) City of Walnut Creek Bicycle Master Plan, 2011. Existing and Proposed Bicycle Facilities.
West Elevation

East Elevation

North Elevation

South Elevation

Route 15 is a local route that operates between the Walnut Creek BART station and the Concord BART Station. It operates on weekdays from 5:45 a.m. to 6:40 p.m. with 65-minute headways.

Route 98X is an express bus service that operates between the Martinez Amtrak Station and the Walnut Creek BART Station. The route operates on weekdays from 5:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. at 40-minute headways.

Two bicycles can be carried on most County Connection buses. Bike rack space is available on a first come, first served basis.

The Walnut Creek BART Station is located on the northwest corner of N. California Boulevard/Ygnacio Valley Road, approximately 0.70 miles southwest of the project site. The Station provides access to nearby counties and is a connection point for County Connection Routes 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 15, 25, 92X, and 98X. Bicycles are allowed on BART.

As shown on Figure 3-3 above, solid waste and recycling receptacles would be provided at the southwest side of the hotel and would be accessible to the solid waste disposal service via the Lawrence Way access point.

3.2.4 PARKING

As shown on Figure 3-3 above, the proposed project would include 41,848 square feet for vehicular and bicycle parking at the street-level in front of and along the south side of the hotel. Within that area, the site would accommodate 113 vehicular parking spaces, including provisions for seven electric vehicle (EV) charging-capable (including two EV-accessible spaces), 11 car/vanpool electric vehicle (CVPE), and five ADA-compliant spaces. As shown on Figure 3-3, six short-term bicycle parking spaces would be located outside the pedestrian walkways and within 200 feet of the main hotel entrance. As shown on Sheet No. DR2.1 in Appendix A of this IS/MND, secured bicycle storage spaces would be located on level one of the proposed hotel.

3.2.5 LANDSCAPING

Approximately 27,640 square feet, or 28 percent of the project site, would be landscaped. As shown on Figure 3-5, landscaped areas would be provided around the perimeter of the hotel development, the front of the hotel entrance, the garden terrace pergola, and around the pool area. The proposed project would remove two of the existing 15 trees on the project site. The existing trees to be removed include one Callery Pear and one Siberian Elm tree, none of which is classified as a “highly protected species” in the City’s tree preservation ordinance. As shown on Figure 3-5, the proposed project would plant 57 trees as well as shrubs, grasses, and other groundcover. The proposed landscaping includes a variety of trees such as Marina strawberry, non-fruiting olive, Coast Live Oak, Drake Elm, Crape Myrtle, Callery Pear,

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Preliminary Landscaping Plan


Figure 3-5

Preliminary Landscaping Plan
California Pepper, Keith Davey Chinese Pistache, Emerald Green Arborvitae, and Water Gum. The ground-level landscaping would be watered with an automated sprinkler and drip irrigation system.

### 3.2.6 LIGHTING

Figure 3-6 illustrates the photometric plan, which shows the lighting plan for the proposed project. The proposed plan would include exterior pole lighting along the Lawrence Way frontage of the site, as well as at the trash enclosure located at the far west portion of the site and around the pool area at the northeast portion of the project site. The source, intensity, and type of exterior lighting for the project site would be typical for orientation and safety needs. As shown on the figure, all on-site lighting would be low-level illumination and would be shielded to reduce light spill or glare.

### 3.2.7 SIGNAGE

The proposed project would include signage on three locations of the hotel building along the Lawrence Way frontage, oriented to the east, north and south. In addition, one monument sign is proposed along the southeast frontage.

### 3.2.8 UTILITIES

Figure 3-7 illustrates the preliminary grading plan, which shows the utility plan for the proposed project. The proposed utility infrastructure would connect to the existing water, sewer, storm drain system, natural gas and electricity network in the area, and would be served by an existing solid waste landfill.

#### 3.2.8.1 WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION

The project site is located within the East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD) service area. As shown on Figure 3-7, the proposed project would connect to the existing 6-inch water main beneath Lawrence Way for domestic and fire service use. Any new connections or replaced water lines would not encroach on previously undisturbed areas. The proposed project incorporates a number of features meant to conserve water used for on-site irrigation per City requirements. All shrub, ornamental grass, and groundcover planting beds will be irrigated with low volume water efficient spray heads and drip irrigation system. Sprinklers shall utilize matched precipitation, pressure compensating nozzles for maximum uniformity of distribution. Irrigation systems will be automatically controlled with smart-type control capabilities based on weather conditions and will have flow sensing capabilities designed to minimize water use. Three-inch minimum depth of fir or redwood bark mulch will be installed in all planting beds. Bio-infiltration areas will receive a 2-inch layer of organic compost.

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13 City of Walnut Creek, April 4, 2006. *Walnut Creek 2025 General Plan EIR*, Utilities and Infrastructure, page 133.
14 City of Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Title 10, Planning and Zoning, Section 110-2.2.1003, Property Development Regulations, Part III, Article 11.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Figure 3-7
Preliminary Grading Plan

3.2.8.2 **SANITARY SEWER SERVICE**

The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (CCCSD) provides wastewater collection and treatment service for Walnut Creek. Sanitary wastewater generated on the project site would be treated by the CCCSD’s wastewater treatment facility.\(^{15}\) As shown on Figure 3-8, the proposed project would connect to the existing 12-inch sewer system line beneath Lawrence Way. Any new connections or replaced sewer lines would not encroach on previously undisturbed areas.

3.2.8.3 **SOLID WASTE SERVICES**

Commercial solid waste is collected within the city by Republic Services, contracted through the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority (CCCSWA).\(^{16}\) Walnut Creek’s commercial solid waste is taken to the Contra Costa Transfer and Recovery Facility in Martinez. Commercial recycling is voluntary in Contra Costa County, and the CCSWA has a commercial recycling permitting program whereby businesses may choose from a list of commercial recyclers.\(^{17}\) The proposed project will include one solid waste and recycling storage area located at the southwest corner of the proposed building.

Consistent with City requirements,\(^{18}\) the project would include a Waste Management Plan, which describes the estimated volume of reusable and recyclable construction and demolition debris and the vendor or facility proposed to collect or receive the diverted materials. As part of the Waste Management Plan procedures, within 30 days after the completion of the proposed project, the applicant would be required to submit a Waste Management Report as proof that the proposed project met the diversion requirements.\(^{19}\)

3.2.8.4 **OTHER UTILITIES**

Gas and electricity would be supplied to the project site by Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) and telephone, cable television, and internet services would be supplied by various providers. As shown on Figure 3-7 above, the project would connect to the existing gas lines, electric vaults, cable and fiber optic lines beneath Lawrence Way.

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\(^{16}\) City of Walnut Creek, April 4, 2006. *Walnut Creek 2025 General Plan EIR*, Utilities and Infrastructure, page 131.

\(^{17}\) City of Walnut Creek, April 4, 2006. *Walnut Creek 2025 General Plan EIR*, Utilities and Infrastructure, page 131.

\(^{18}\) City of Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Title 5, Sanitation and Health, Chapter 5-3.603, Submission of Waste Management Plan (WMP).

\(^{19}\) City of Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Title 5, Sanitation and Health, Chapter 5-3.603, Submission of Waste Management Report (WMR).

Figure 3-8
Preliminary Stormwater Plan
3.2.8.5 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

As shown on Figure 3-8, the proposed project would connect to the City’s existing storm drain system via the 24-inch storm drain located on the property and a 24-inch storm drain located at the far north portion of the project site along Penniman Way. The pre-project impervious surface area consisted of the entire site (98,536 square feet). The proposed project would replace 68,466 square feet of existing impervious area, resulting in a decrease of impervious surfaces by 30,070 square feet. The proposed drainage includes an internal storm drain network that connects to 21 bioretention areas that total 3,404 square feet along the perimeter of the site and building entrance. Other stormwater design features include directing roof runoff onto vegetated areas, directing runoff from sidewalks, walkways, and patios onto vegetated areas, slotted retaining curbs and gutters that direct parking lot runoff to vegetated areas, and permeable pavers for surface parking spaces. Stormwater runoff generated at the site would be treated, filtered, and released gradually to the City’s storm drain system. The location and configuration of the proposed stormwater low impact development (LID) features are shown on Figure 3-8.

3.2.9 SITE PREPARATION AND CONSTRUCTION

3.2.9.1 SITE PREPARATION

Development of the proposed project would involve demolition of existing structures and removal of the hardscaped areas, prior to grading. The project site will undergo a remediation process, prior to construction of the hotel under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). Specifically, vapor intrusion mitigation is required to minimize the potential for volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in soil gas to migrate into a future building’s interior. As discussed in Chapter 4, Environmental Analysis, the Removal Action Work Plan describes remedial alternatives to mitigation for vapor intrusion. The selected alternatives are engineering and institutional controls, and include:

- Incorporation of an aerated floor with passive venting into the building’s design;
- Preparation of a Site Management Plan; and
- Placement of a Land Use Covenant on the property.

The proposed project construction would comprise up to 61,403 square feet for the hotel and surface parking, 9,870 square feet of paving and hardscape (e.g., curb, gutters, planters, seat walls, etc.), and 27,640 square feet of landscaping and other pervious surfaces. The estimated demolition and construction would take place over a period of approximately 17 months, which is anticipated to commence in September 2018, subject to regulatory approval.

After demolition of the buildings, parking lots, other hardscape, and landscaping would be removed. Demolition debris would be recycled, reused, or disposed of pursuant to a Construction & Demolition Waste Management Plan Agreement between the applicant and the City as required under City Municipal...
Code Chapter 5-3.603. Debris to be hauled would include approximately 8,488 square feet of building demolition and 1,542 tons of asphalt; all debris would be recycled. To be conservative, it is estimated that a maximum of 1,000 cubic yards of soil would be exported; soil import is not anticipated to occur. Site preparation, including grading and utility trenches, would be in compliance with recommendations in the project geotechnical engineering report, which is included as Appendix C, Geotechnical Report, of this IS/MND.

During demolition and construction, vehicle, equipment, and materials would be staged and stored on a portion of the project site. The construction site and staging areas would be clearly marked, and barriers would be installed to prevent disturbance and safety hazards. No staging would occur in the public right-of-way. A combination of on- and off-site parking facilities for construction workers would be identified during demolition, grading, and construction, and all work would be subject to a construction traffic control plan to be approved by the City. The demolition and construction phase would generate approximately 550 temporary jobs with approximately 10 to 50 workers on-site daily. Construction work hours would be consistent with City requirements.

### 3.3 REQUIRED APPROVALS

Development of the project would require the following entitlements from the City of Walnut Creek: 1) Zoning Amendment (Rezoning) to change the designation from A-S to P-D in order to accommodate the hotel use; 2) Design Review approval; and a 3) Tree Removal Permit. Ministerial permits will include a Site Development Plan (SDP). A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would be included in the SDP. Development of the project would also be required to comply with Municipal Regional Permit requirements related to stormwater pollution prevention, as well as DTSC requirements related to remediation of potential hazardous materials located on-site. Construction of the project would require the appropriate Building Permits.

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20 City of Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Title 5, Sanitation and Health, Chapter 5-3.603, Submission of Waste Management Plan (WMP).

21 Geotechnical Investigation, Hilton Garden Inn Hotel, 490 Lawrence Way, Walnut Creek, CA, Stevens Ferrone & Bailey, Project Number 795-1, September 5, 2017.