

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: ☒ Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Tustin Unified School District

1302 Service Road

Tustin, CA 92780

☒ County Clerk-Recorder
County of Orange

601 N Ross Street

Santa Ana, CA 92701

Sycamore Magnet Academy Parking Lot Improvements Project

Project Title

1402 Sycamore Avenue

Project Location - Specific

Tustin

Project Location – City

Orange

Project Location – County

The Tustin Unified School District proposes to develop a new staff parking lot on the Sycamore Magnet Academy campus to accommodate overflow parking and replace existing fencing along the boundary of the proposed project site. The parking lot will be south of the track and field with access via School Lane. The parking lot will include 41 standard parking spaces, one ADA accessible parking space, and one van accessible parking space. An ADA path of travel and sidewalk will be installed from the parking lot into the campus. Stormwater management infrastructure will be constructed and will include a modular wetlands stormwater mitigation flow along the southern portion of the proposed parking lot.

The parking lot will be paved with asphalt, six-inch curbs will surround the parking lot, and concrete wheel stops will be installed at each parking space. Entrance signs to the parking lot will be installed at the entrance of the parking lot.

The existing fencing and a portion of the existing asphalt along the fire lane located near the YMCA buildings will be removed. A new fence will be installed further out to make more room for the existing fire lane and the demolished asphalt will be replaced with concrete. The existing fence adjacent to School Lane adjacent to the proposed parking lot will be removed. Additionally, a six-foot tall black vinyl chain link fence, rolling gate, and pedestrian gate will be installed along the boundary of the proposed parking lot.

No offsite improvements are proposed, and the project will not increase student capacity at the school.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project

Tustin Unified School District

Name of Public Agency Approving Project

Tustin Unified School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project

Exempt Status: (check one below)

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures; and Class 11, Accessory Structures
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

The proposed project will include the installation of fencing, vehicle and pedestrian gates, and stormwater management infrastructure, which is exempt from CEQA under Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (Section 15301), because the improvements qualify as small structures on an existing campus. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from further CEQA analysis under Section 15303.

Construction of the new parking lot within Sycamore Magnet Academy campus will be exempt from CEQA under Class 11, Accessory Structures (small parking lot), because qualifies as a small parking lot on an existing campus. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from further CEQA analysis under Section 15311.

The proposed project was also reviewed for possible exceptions under Section 15300.2 and found that the exceptions do not apply.

See Attachment to Notice of Exemption for further explanation of the evaluation, which is available for review at the District office.

Reasons why project is exempt

Tom Rizzuti, Director of Facilities Planning

(714) 730-7515 Ext. 50404

Contact Person:

Area Code/Telephone/Extension:

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption findings
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project ☐ Yes ☐ No

Date

Received for

Filing: _____

Signature:

Tom Rizzuti

Title:

Director - Facilities Planning

Attachment to Notice of Exemption
Sycamore Magnet Academy Parking Lot Improvements Project
TUSTIN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Sycamore Magnet Academy is one of 28 schools within the Tustin Unified School District (District) and serves students from Kindergarten to 8th grade. The District proposes constructing a new 43-space parking lot and installing new fencing at the Sycamore Magnet Academy at 1402 Sycamore Avenue, in Tustin (proposed project). This supplemental information provides justification for the Categorical Exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines under California Code of Regulations, Title 14 § 15303 and 15311.

1. EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is located south of the track and field and north of the existing YMCA buildings (Assessor Parcel Number [APN] 432-011-07, 432-011-12, 432-011-13, and 432-011-22). The project site is bordered by School Lane to the west, the track and field to the north, a school baseball field to the south, and a school playground to the east. Regional access to the facility is provided via Interstate 5 (I-5) and California State Route 55 (SR-55), approximately 0.8 miles to the northeast and 0.4 miles to the west, respectively (See Figure 1, *Regional Location Map*).

SURROUNDING LAND USES

The campus is in a mixed-use neighborhood of Tustin. The campus is surrounded by a mix of industrial, residential, recreational, and institutional uses (See Figure 2, *Local Vicinity Map*). The general plan designations consist of PI (Public/Institutional), HDR (High Density Residential), LDR (Low Density Residential), and PCCB (Planned Community Commercial/Business)(City of Tustin 2018a). The zoning designations consist of PI (Public and Institutional), PC RES (Planned Community Residential), R-1 (Single Family Residential), R4 (Suburban Residential), and PC COM (Planned Community Commercial) (City of Tustin 2018b).

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The campus includes eight classroom buildings, a multipurpose building, an administration building, a quad, and two YMCA buildings. Additionally, the campus includes three parking lots, fencing surrounding the campus, a track and field, six baseball fields, and three play areas that consist of eight basketball and 10 volleyball courts, three play structures, and other playground activities. Existing solar canopies on campus are located in the parking lots adjacent to Sycamore Avenue, near the corner of Sycamore Avenue and Red Hill Avenue, and just south of the existing track and field, just north of the proposed parking lot (See Figure 3, *Proposed Project*; Figure 4, *Proposed Parking Lot*). Ornamental landscaping and trees are located throughout the campus.

Vehicular access to the campus is currently provided by Sycamore Avenue to the northeast, School Lane to the north, and Service Road to the south of the campus. School Lane provides a two-way driveway to the parking lot in the northwest corner of the campus. A two-way driveway also exists along Sycamore Lane, which connects to the parking on the northern side of the campus. The northern parking lot allows for pick-up/drop-off of students. The third parking lot is located behind Building 800 and can be accessed via a two-way driveway adjacent to Service Road.

The driveways adjacent to Sycamore Avenue and Service Road provide emergency service access to the campus.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Tustin Unified School District proposes to develop a new staff parking lot on the Sycamore Magnet Academy campus to accommodate overflow parking and replace existing fencing along the boundary of the proposed project site. The parking lot will be south of the track and field with access via School Lane. The parking lot will include 41 standard parking spaces, one ADA accessible parking space, and one van accessible parking space. An ADA path of travel and sidewalk will be installed from the parking lot into the campus.

The parking lot will be paved with asphalt, six-inch curbs will surround the parking lot, and concrete wheel stops will be installed at each parking space. Entrance signs to the parking lot will be installed at the entrance of the parking lot.

The existing fencing and a portion of the existing asphalt along the fire lane located near the YMCA buildings will be removed. A new fence will be installed further out to make more room for the existing fire lane and the demolished asphalt will be replaced with concrete. The existing fence adjacent to School Lane adjacent to the proposed parking lot will be removed. Additionally, a six-foot tall black vinyl chain link fence, rolling gate, and pedestrian gate will be installed along the boundary of the proposed parking lot.

No offsite improvements are proposed, and the project will not increase student capacity at the school.

CONSTRUCTION

Once construction begins, all construction equipment and workers will be located within the boundaries of the project site and contractors will adhere to construction noise regulations to avoid disruption to campus operations.

3. REASONS THAT THE PROJECT IS EXEMPT

The proposed project is exempt from further environmental review under the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code §§ 21000 et seq.) because it is consistent with Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures; Class 3, Minor Alterations to Land; and Class 11, Accessory Structures, as explained below.

- » **Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (CEQA Guidelines § 15303)** consists of the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure.

The proposed project will include the installation of fencing, vehicle and pedestrian gates, and stormwater management infrastructure, which are exempt from CEQA under Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (Section 15303), because the improvements qualify as small structures to an existing campus. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from further CEQA analysis under Section 15303.

- » **Class 11, Accessory Structures (CEQA Guidelines § 15311)** consists of construction, or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including but not limited to: On-premise signs; Small parking lots; Placement of seasonal or temporary use items such as lifeguard towers, mobile food units, portable restrooms, or similar items in generally the same locations from time to time in publicly owned parks, stadiums, or other facilities designed for public use.

Construction of the new parking lot within Sycamore Magnet Academy campus is exempt from CEQA under Class 11, Accessory Structures (small parking lot), because it qualifies as a small parking lot on an existing campus. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from further CEQA analysis under Section 15311.

4. REVIEW OF EXCEPTIONS TO THE CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION

The proposed project has been reviewed under CEQA Guidelines § 15300.2 - Exceptions, for any characteristics or circumstances that might invalidate findings that the proposed project is exempt from CEQA. Each exception is listed below followed by an assessment of whether that exception applies to the proposed project.

- (a) **Location.** Classes 3,4,5,6 and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project would be located—a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

The project site is completely within the Sycamore Magnet Academy campus and is surrounded by a mix of industrial, residential, recreational, and institutional uses. The campus is developed with buildings, asphalt parking lots, a track and field, play areas and play structures, solar canopies, concrete walkways and driveways, fencing, and ornamental landscaping. According to the Critical Habitat for Endanger Species mapper, there are no critical habitats identified on campus or in the vicinity of campus (FWS 2024). Due to the developed nature of the project site and frequent human disturbance, it does not contain any sensitive biological species or habitat. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project.

- (b) **Cumulative Impacts.** All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

The District does not intend to construct any additional projects of the same type at the project site over time. Construction schedules at other District school improvement sites could overlap with the proposed project. However, proposed improvements at each project site will be executed individually and are anticipated to have site-specific impacts. Similar projects at nearby schools will not have an impact on the proposed project. Thus, the proposed project, when combined with cumulative District projects, will not create a significant cumulative under CEQA, and no cumulative impacts will occur. This exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- (c) **Significant Effects.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

There is no reasonable possibility that the proposed project will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. The construction manager will execute construction activities per current local, state, and federal laws, regulations, construction Best Management Practices (BMPs), District standards, and guidelines.

Temporary Construction Noise

Noise created by construction is allowed between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Construction noise is also allowed between 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays but is prohibited on Sundays and City observed federal holidays, according to the City of Tustin Ordinance Code (TOC) Chapter 6, 4616 (City of Tustin 2024). Noise producing construction activities will include site preparation and grading of the project site. It will also include paving for the parking lot, installation of electrical utilities, and demolition and installation of curbs and fencing. These activities will utilize equipment such as, but not limited to, dozers, backhoes, excavators, loaders, rollers, and construction vehicles for delivery and transport of equipment, material, and workers.

The nearest sensitive receptors are residential properties located approximately 0.05-miles west of the project site. Project construction will temporarily expose the nearby sensitive receptors to elevated noise levels. However,

construction noise will be temporary and will cease upon completion of the project. In addition, construction equipment and trucks will utilize the best available noise control techniques (e.g., improved mufflers, equipment re-design, use of intake silencers, ducts, engine enclosures, and acoustically attenuating shields, shrouds, or temporary noise barriers), wherever feasible. Temporary construction noise impacts will be less than significant.

Temporary Construction Vibration

Construction can generate varying degrees of ground vibration, depending on the construction procedures and equipment. Operation of construction equipment generates vibrations that spread through the ground and diminish with distance from the source. The effect on buildings in the vicinity of the construction site varies depending on soil type, ground strata, and receptor-building construction. The effects from vibration can range from no perceptible effects at the lowest vibration levels, to low rumbling sounds and perceptible vibrations at moderate levels, to slight structural damage at the highest levels. Vibration from construction activities rarely reaches the levels that can damage structures.

For reference, a vibration level of 0.2 inches per second (in/sec) peak particle velocity (PPV) is used as the limit for non-engineered timber and masonry buildings (which could be applied to the surrounding residential structures) (Federal Transit Administration 2018). At a distance of greater than 25 feet, vibration levels from typical construction equipment including vibratory rollers attenuate to less than the 0.2 in/sec PPV. The nearest offsite structures is approximately 50 feet north of the project site boundary. Therefore, vibration levels will not exceed the 0.2 in/sec PPV threshold, and vibration impacts will be less than significant.

- (d) Scenic Highways.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.

There are no designated state scenic highways near the project site or the campus. According to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) California Scenic Highway Mapping System, the closest officially designated state scenic highway is State Route 91, approximately 11 miles to the north of the project site. Additionally, State Route 1 is eligible for designation; however, it is located approximately 9 miles southwest of the project site (Caltrans 2024). Construction and operation of the proposed project will be completely within the project site; thus, the proposed project will not affect scenic resources along any scenic highways. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- (e) Hazardous Waste Sites.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5.

California Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the compiling of lists of the following types of hazardous materials sites: hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action; hazardous waste discharges for which the State Water Quality Control Board has issued certain types of orders; public drinking water wells containing detectable levels of organic contaminants; underground storage tanks with reported unauthorized releases; and solid waste disposal facilities from which hazardous waste has migrated.

Five environmental databases were searched for hazardous materials sites on the site and within a quarter mile radius:

- » EnviroStor. Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC 2024)
- » GeoTracker. State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB 2024)
- » EJScreen. US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA 2024a)
- » EnviroMapper. US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA 2024b)

Table 1, Hazardous Waste Sites within 0.25 miles

Site Address	Database	Identifier	Cleanup Status	Proximity to Site
14591 Red Hill Avenue, Tustin, CA (T10000010381)	GeoTracker	Tetrachloroethylene (PCE), Trichloroethylene (TCE)	Open - Site Assessment (5/8/2017)	900 feet East
1472 Service Road, Tustin, CA (30-AB-0437)	Solid Waste Information System	Mixed Municipal/Inert/Green Materials	Active – Limited Volume Transfer Operation	800 feet South

Source: SWRCB 2024; CalRecycle 2024

According to the DTSC’s EnviroStor, there are no designated cleanup sites within a quarter mile from the project site. The USEPA EJ Screen and EnvironMapper did not identify any hazardous sites within a quarter mile from the project site. However, the SWRCB GeoTracker identified an open cleanup program site approximately 900 feet east of the project site at 14591 Red Hill Avenue. The identifiers for the site are tetrachloroethylene (PCE) and trichloroethylene (TCE). Both PCE and TCE are industrial solvents but are only hazardous if in a building containing PCE and TCE vapors (MNDH 2018). As a result of the project site being 900 feet east of the hazardous site, no impacts will occur.

The CalRecycle Solid Waste Information System identified a solid waste site at 1472 Service Road approximately 800 south of the project site. The site was identified as an active site transferring solid waste that consists of mixed municipal waste (garbage, refuse), inert waste (concrete, clay), and green materials (yard waste) (Law Insider 2024; Commercial Recycling 2024). The solid waste is typical of waste that will come from residential and commercial uses and is not considered hazardous. Therefore, solid waste disposal at this site will not result in any impacts.

The project site and its surroundings are not identified in any of the other databases and are not identified as a hazardous materials site pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Therefore, the project will not create a hazard to the public. This exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- (f) Historical Resources.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources. Under Public Resource Code § 21084.1, a historical resource is a resource listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. Additionally, historical resources included in a local register of historical resources are presumed to be historically or culturally significant, and a lead agency can determine whether the resource may be an historical resource.

There are no historic resources on or within a 0.25-mile radius of the project site that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NPS 2024), the California Register of Historical Resources (OHP 2024a), or as a California State Historical Landmark (OHP 2024b). Therefore, implementation of the proposed project will not cause significant impacts to historical resources, and the historical resources exception will not apply to the proposed project.

5. CONCLUSION

The proposed project at Sycamore Magnet Academy is exempt from CEQA review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 and 15311. As substantiated in this document, the proposed project will not meet conditions specified in § 15300.2, Exceptions, of the CEQA Guidelines, and the proposed project is categorically exempt under Class 3 and Class 11.

6. REFERENCES

- California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle). 2024. SWIS Facticity/Site Search. <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/Site/Search>
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2024. California Highway System. <https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>
- City of Tustin. 2018a. City of Tustin General Plan. <https://www.tustinca.org/DocumentCenter/View/713/City-of-Tustin-General-Plan-PDF>
- City of Tustin. 2018b. Zoning Map: City of Tustin. <https://www.tustinca.org/DocumentCenter/View/721/Zoning-Map-PDF>
- Commercial Recycling. Accessed April 3, 2024. What is inert waste?. <https://www.commercialrecycling.co.uk/what-is-inert-waste/>
- Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). 2024. EnviroStor. <http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/?surl=5yfxj>
- Law Insider. Accessed April, 3, 2024. Mixed solid waste definition. <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/mixed-solid-waste>
- Minnesota Department of Health (MNDH). November 20, 2018. Trichloroethylene (TCE) and Tetrachloroethylene (PCE) Exposures and Vapor Intrusion. <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/hazardous/docs/vihcpinfo.pdf>
- National Park Service (NPS). 2024. National Register of Historic Places. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm>
- Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). 2024a. California Historical Resources. <https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/?view=county&criteria=19>
- Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). 2024b. California Historical Landmarks. https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21427
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). 2024. GeoTracker. <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/map/?CMD=runreport&myaddress=gahr+high+school#>
- US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). 2024a. EJSCREEN. <https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>
- US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). 2024b. EnviroMapper for EnviroFacts. <https://www3.epa.gov/enviro/index.html>
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS). 2024. National Wetlands Inventory – Wetlands Mapper. <https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/data/mapper.HTML>

7. LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Regional Location Map

Figure 2. Local Vicinity Map

Figure 3. Proposed Project

Figure 4. Proposed Parking Lots

Figure 1 - Regional Location Map

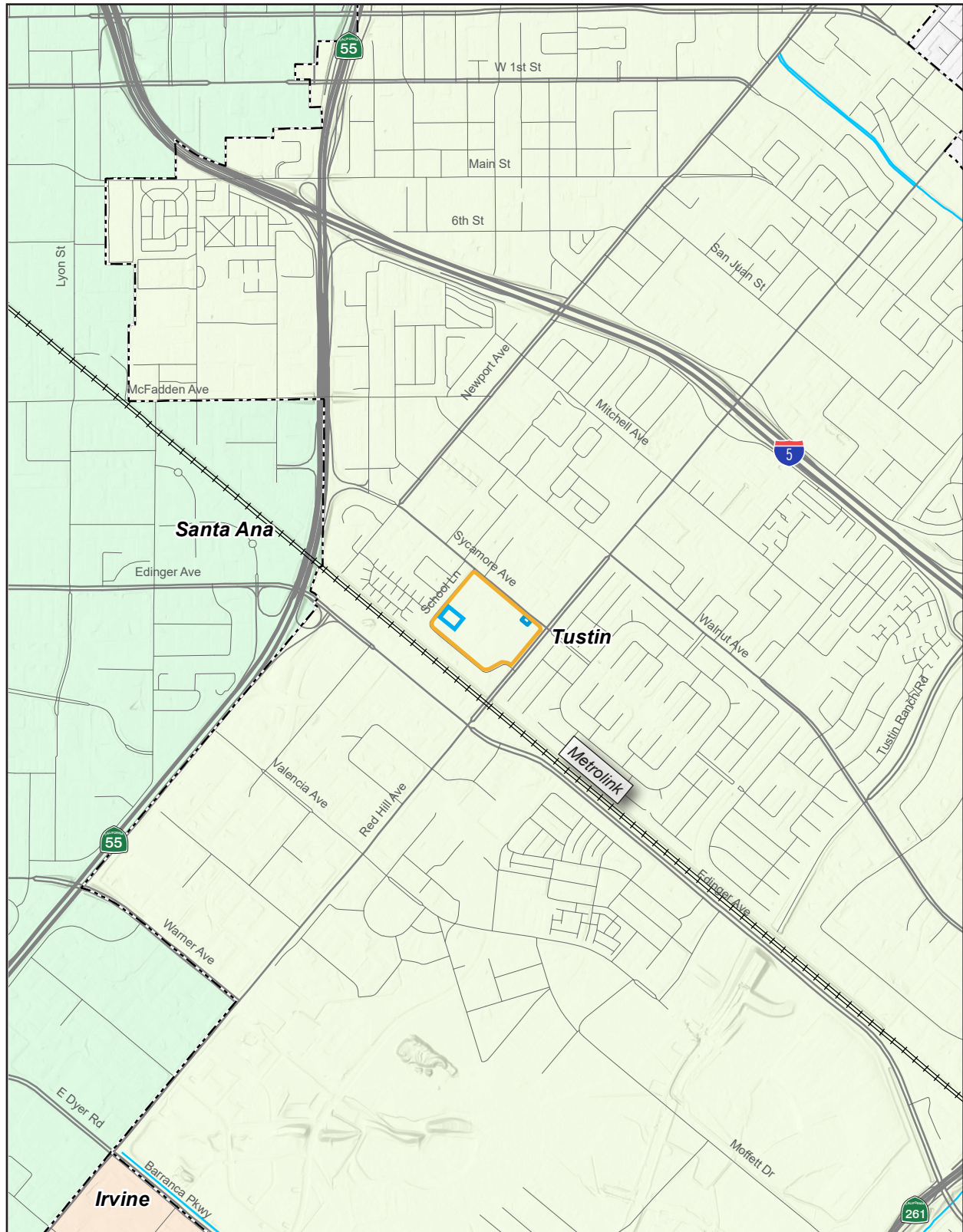


Note: Unincorporated county areas are shown in white.
Source: Generated using Arcmap 2024.

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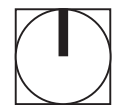
Figure 2 - Local Vicinity Map



— School Boundary - - - City Boundary
— Project Boundary

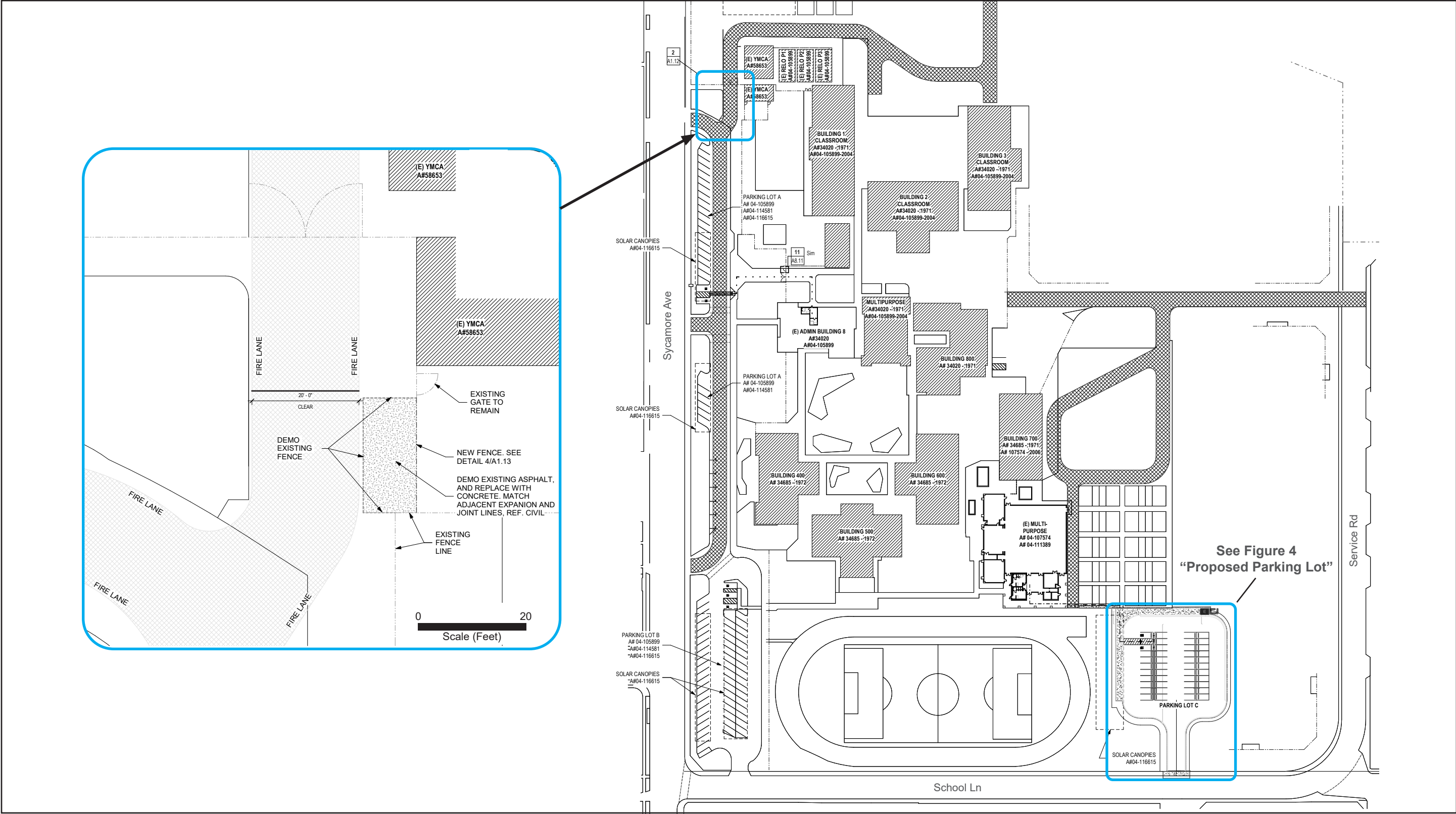
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Source: Generated using Arcmap 2024.



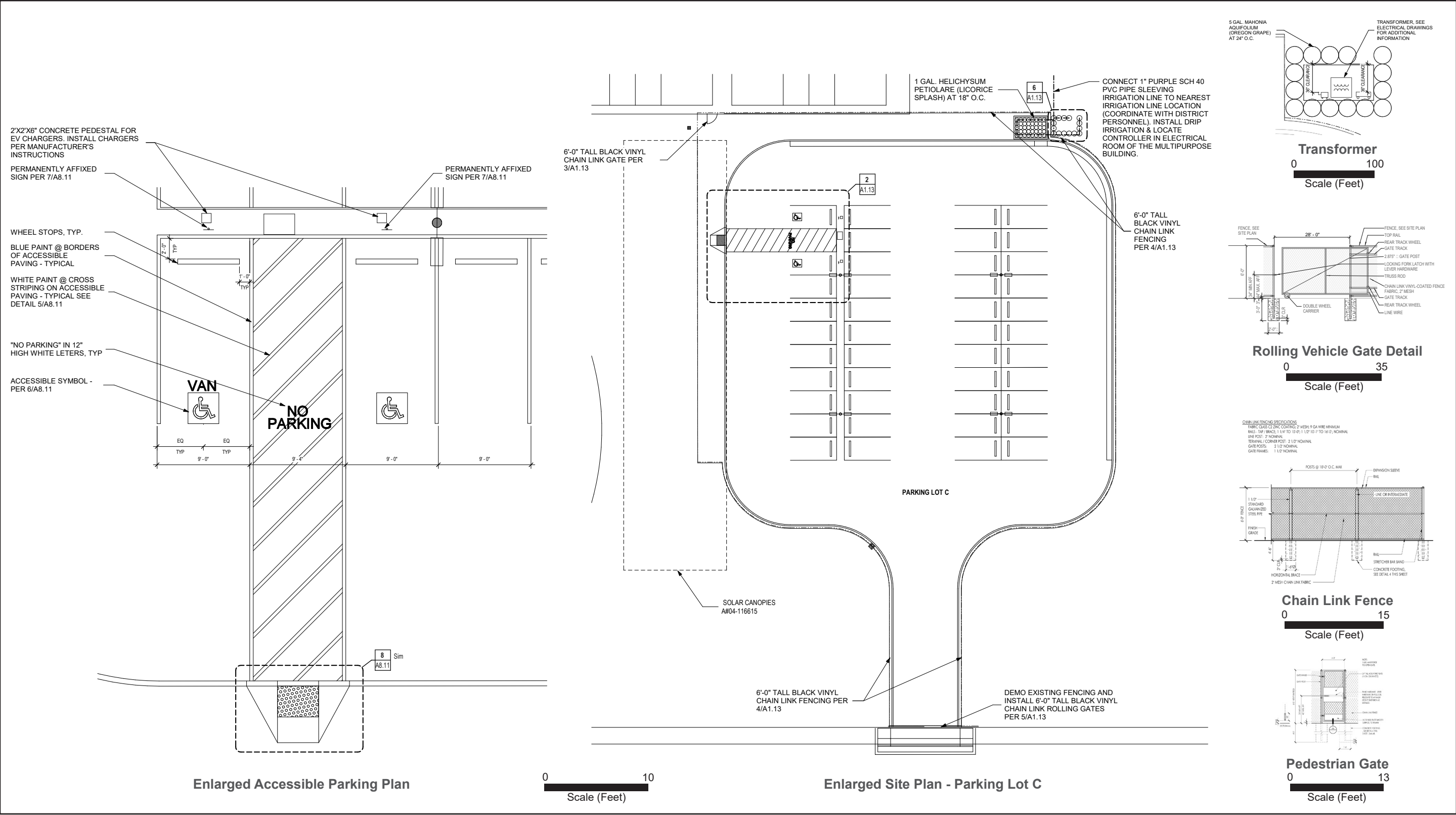
PlaceWorks

Figure 3 - Proposed Project



Source: Huckabee 2024.

Figure 4 - Proposed Parking Lot



Source: Huckabee 2024.

