

FILED

JUN 27 2025

Notice of Exemption

To: ☒ Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

☒ County Clerk
County of Monterey
168 West Alisal Street, 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

From: (Public Agency) City of Sand City
1 Pendergrass Way
Sand City, CA 93955

(Address)

XOCHITL MARINA CAMACHO
SAND CITY COUNTY CLERK
DEPUTY

7025-0103

Project Title: Sand City Multiuse Trail

Project Applicant: City of Sand City

Project Location – Specific: Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) railway corridor from Canyon Del Rey Boulevard to Playa Avenue.

Project Location – City: Sand City

Project Location – County: Monterey

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of the Project:

The City of Sand City will construct a new multiuse trail that will close a one-mile gap in the regional coastal trail network. The project includes the development of a dedicated 12-foot-wide bicycle path and an adjacent 8-foot-wide pedestrian path, along with pedestrian safety improvements at key intersections, new parking areas, and outdoor fitness stations. Additional improvements include landscaping, gathering areas, wayfinding signage, and supporting infrastructure within the existing public right-of-way and adjacent City-owned parcels. See the attached for a detailed discussion of the improvements.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Sand City

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: City of Sand City

Exempt Status: (check one)

- ☐ 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: Minor Alterations to Land Section 15304 (h) (Class 4)
☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project involves the construction of a multiuse trail within existing public rights-of-way. The improvements are consistent with Section 15304(h) of the CEQA Guidelines, which exempts minor alterations to land for the creation of bicycle lanes on existing rights-of-way. The project does not involve expansion beyond the existing transportation corridor or result in a significant increase in capacity. See attachment for additional details.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Vibeke Norgaard, City Manager **Area Code/Telephone/Extension:** (831) 394-6811

If filed by applicant:

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

Signature: _____

Date: 06/27/2025

Title: Consultant to City

☒ Signed by Lead Agency

Date received for filing at OPR: _____

☐ Signed by Applicant

Revised 2011

City of Sand City Sand City Multiuse Trail Project Description and Evidence for Categorical Exemption

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The multiuse trail system will span approximately one mile within the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) railway corridor, connecting the existing recreational trail system at the Del Monte Boulevard and Canyon Del Rey Boulevard intersection in the City of Seaside to the future MST SURF! station located at the intersection of Playa Avenue and California Avenue. The trail will also offer direct access to the West End District at Holly Street/Ortiz Avenue and Redwood Avenue, as well as connections to the Coastal Trail along Tioga Avenue.

For most of the alignment, the trail will consist of two distinct paths—one 8-foot-wide path designated for pedestrians and a 12-foot-wide path designated for cyclists—designed to provide a safer and more efficient experience for all users. A 12 mile per hour speed limit will be applied for all cyclist travel to ensure trail safety and maintain regulatory consistency with the existing regional trail network. The trail also features ample landscaping, creating a green belt along the Sand City/Seaside City limit line, enhancing both the aesthetics and environmental value of the area. [Attachment A, Sand City Multiuse Trail Planting](#), illustrates the location of the future bicycle and pedestrian paths and trailside facilities within the existing rights-of-way.

The project will improve pedestrian safety at key intersections, ensuring safer crossings. Parking facilities are strategically placed throughout the design to provide easy access to the trail and nearby transit hubs, ultimately reducing traffic congestion across the City by promoting non-motorized and public transportation options.

Trail Alignment within the City of Sand City

The majority of the trail, approximately 0.8 miles, lies within the City's limits, extending from the future MST SURF! project site at the intersection of Playa and California Avenue to the city's southern boundary at Olympia Avenue.

Pedestrians and cyclists headed south will access the trail at the southeast corner of the Playa and California Avenue intersection, just south of the planned rapid bus transit station. Upon entering the railway corridor, the trail splits into two designated pathways, with cyclists directed to the east and pedestrians to the west. The paths merge again to guide users toward the established crossing at Tioga Avenue. Past Tioga Avenue, the trails separate once more after reentering the railway corridor, running parallel to one another for approximately 0.6 miles until reaching Contra Costa Street. The pathways then merge once again to guide users safely across Contra Costa Street, continuing to the City limits at Olympia Avenue.

Trail Alignment within the City of Seaside

The southern most end of the trail, approximately 0.2 miles, will be located within the City of Seaside, running from the City limit at Olympia Avenue to the existing Monterey Bay Coastal Recreation Trail at the intersection of Del Monte Avenue and Canyon Del Rey Boulevard (State Route 218). Due to the topography of the railway corridor in Seaside, the pedestrian and cyclist trails merge for approximately 0.1-miles until reaching the northwest corner of what is currently the Starbucks property. At this point, the trails diverge, providing access to both Canyon Del Rey Boulevard (State Route 218) and Del Monte Avenue.

Trail signage and embedded sidewalk markers will be installed along Del Monte Avenue and Canyon Del Rey Boulevard, directing pedestrians and cyclists to the established crossing, ensuring safe access to the regional trail system. The design will incorporate “Protected Intersection” features at Canyon Del Rey (State Route 218) and Del Monte. These features include the construction of bulb outs and curb extensions, expanded or improved sidewalks, physical barriers separating traffic and cyclists, as well as directional signage, sidewalk markers, crosswalk painting for better navigation, and improved signalization.

Trail Lighting

The multiuse trail will feature strategically placed lighting along its entire length, enhancing safety and accessibility for all users during early morning and evening hours. Lighting will improve visibility, reducing the risk of accidents for pedestrians and cyclists and creating a safer environment for trail users after dark. Additionally, well-lit trails have been shown to deter unwanted activity, increasing the sense of security for the community. This lighting will also support extended usage of the trail, encouraging more people to choose walking or cycling as alternatives to car travel.

Trailside Parking Facilities

The preliminary project design includes a total of 150 new parking spaces within the existing disturbed right-of-way adjacent to the bicycle and pedestrian paths to facilitate access to the trail network. The trailside parking facilities are incorporated at the following locations:

- Forty-five (45) parking spaces between Playa Avenue and Tioga Avenue. Parking is located within the existing disturbed areas of the right-of-way and will facilitate one way vehicle traffic with motorist entering from Tioga Avenue and exiting onto Playa Avenue;
- Fifteen (15) parking spaces adjacent to California Avenue directly east of the South of Tioga development area. Parking is located within the existing disturbed areas of the right-of-way and will facilitate one way vehicle traffic with motorist entering from and exiting on California Avenue; and
- Ninety (90) parking spaces from the southern boundary of the Granite Rock property to Contra Costa Street. Parking is located within the existing disturbed areas of the right-of-way and will facilitate one way vehicle traffic, with motorist entering from Contra Costa Street and exiting onto either Holly Street/Ortiz Avenue or Redwood Avenue.

Intersection Improvements

When designing the trail, careful consideration was given to pedestrian crossings at intersections to ensure safety and accessibility, including the following factors:

- Visibility of pedestrians for drivers
- Adequate signage and signals
- Crosswalk markings and lighting
- Timing of traffic signals for pedestrian flow
- Implementation of bulb outs and curb extensions
- Accessibility for people with disabilities
- Potential for traffic calming measures
- Installation of rapid flashing beacons
- Implementation of raised crosswalks
- Access to public transit stops

Trailside Gathering and Exercise Areas

There are three gathering areas located within the existing disturbed areas of the right-of-way adjacent to the trail system within the City. The seating areas are positioned adjacent to the trail but outside the established path of travel, ensuring safety and accessibility. One area is near the City's entrance between Olympia Avenue and Contra Costa Street. A second, larger picnic-style seating area is located behind the Redwood Business Center, and a third area is situated directly east of the South of the Tioga development area. The various

gathering areas will include amenities such as lighting, informational signage, bicycle parking and a repair stations, trash receptacles, and a variety of seating options, including benches and picnic tables. These spaces will create natural gathering points along the trail, enhancing the overall user experience by providing areas for rest and community engagement.

In addition to seating, the trail system will feature five outdoor exercise areas strategically placed within the existing disturbed areas of the right-of-way along the trail alignment. Each exercise area will be equipped with a mix of lower-body and upper-body workout equipment, such as pull-up bars, parallel bars, sit-up benches, and leg presses, offering a variety of exercises for users of all fitness levels. The equipment will be constructed from weather-resistant materials, ensuring durability and functionality while minimizing maintenance needs. These outdoor exercise zones not only promote health and wellness by encouraging physical activity along the trail but also provide an accessible fitness option for the community. By integrating these exercise areas, the project creates an engaging and active environment that supports both recreational and fitness-oriented trail use.

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION AND EVIDENCE

The project qualifies for a categorical exemption under Article 19, Section 15304 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

15304. Minor Alterations to Land: Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. Examples include but are not limited to:

- (a) Grading on land with a slope of less than 10 percent, except that grading shall not be exempt in a waterway, in any wetland, in an officially designated (by federal, state, or local government action) scenic area, or in officially mapped areas of severe geologic hazard such as an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or within an official Seismic Hazard Zone, as delineated by the State Geologist.
- (b) New gardening or landscaping, including the replacement of existing conventional landscaping with water efficient or fire-resistant landscaping.
- (c) Filling of earth into previously excavated land with material compatible with the natural features of the site.
- (d) Minor alterations in land, water, and vegetation on existing officially designated wildlife management areas or fish production facilities which result in improvement of habitat for fish and wildlife resources or greater fish production.
- (e) Minor temporary use of land having negligible or no permanent effects on the environment, including carnivals, sales of Christmas trees, etc.

- (f) Minor trenching and backfilling where the surface is restored.
- (g) Maintenance dredging where the spoil is deposited in a spoil area authorized by all applicable state and federal regulatory agencies.
- (h) The creation of bicycle lanes on existing rights-of-way.
- (g) Fuel management activities within 30 feet of structures to reduce the volume of flammable vegetation, provided that the activities will not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species or significant erosion and sedimentation of surface waters. This exemption shall apply to fuel management activities within 100 feet of a structure if the public agency having fire protection responsibility for the area has determined that 100 feet of fuel clearance is required due to extra hazardous fire conditions.

Evidence and Findings

The project involves the construction of a new multiuse trail within existing public rights-of-way. The Multiuse Trail is located on a fully disturbed, obsolete railway corridor. The surrounding area is fully urbanized, with commercial development on all sides of the trail. All improvements will be designed and constructed in accordance with applicable California Building Code Title 24 standards.

The project does not involve the expansion of existing transportation infrastructure that would increase capacity beyond what currently exists, nor does it require acquisition of new right-of-way.

For these reasons, the project is categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15304(h) – Class 4, as it consists of the creation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within existing rights-of-way and involves minor alterations to land.

Exceptions to Categorical Exemptions

Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines lists exceptions that would prohibit a project from qualifying for a Categorical Exemption, even if the project satisfies the requirements for one or more of the exemption classes. The City's CEQA consultant, EMC Planning Group, conducted an independent review and evaluation of the project, conducted independent research, and reviewed project plans prepared by the City's engineer. Based on its review, EMC Planning Group concluded that none of the exceptions listed in CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2 (a-f) apply to the project (discussed below). Therefore, a Categorical Exemption is appropriate pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15304.

- a) **Location.** Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to 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.

***Discussion.** While the project is located within the Coastal Zone, it is situated entirely within a fully disturbed right-of-way surrounded by existing commercial development. The site does not contain or impact any environmental resources of hazardous or critical concern that have been designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted by federal, state, or local agencies. Therefore, this exception does not apply.*

- b) **Cumulative Impact.** 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.

***Discussion.** The multiuse trail represents a single, standalone infrastructure improvement along an obsolete, fully disturbed railway corridor. There are no known successive or concurrent projects of the same type occurring in the same location that would contribute to a cumulative impact. Additionally, the project is consistent with regional and local transportation planning efforts aimed at expanding bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, which are designed to reduce environmental impacts such as vehicle emissions and congestion.*

- c) **Significant Effect.** 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.

***Discussion.** Neither the City nor the City's consultants are aware of any unusual circumstances associated with the project such that the project would result in a reasonable possibility of resulting in a significant effect on the environment.*

- 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. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.

***Discussion.** The project site is not located within the viewshed of a state-designated scenic highway and would not result in damage to scenic resources such as trees, historic buildings, or natural features.*

- 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 Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

***Discussion.** The project is not located on a site that is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. The site is not located on the California Environmental Protection Agency's Cortese List (Health and Safety Code Section 25187.5). The State Water Resources Control Board's GeoTracker (Health and Safety Code Section 25295 and Water Code Sections 13273 and 13301) does not indicate any hazardous sites within the project site. The project site is also not listed on the California Environmental Protection Agency's list of solid waste sites identified by the Water Board with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit (Health and Safety Code Section 116395).*

- f) **Historical Resources.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

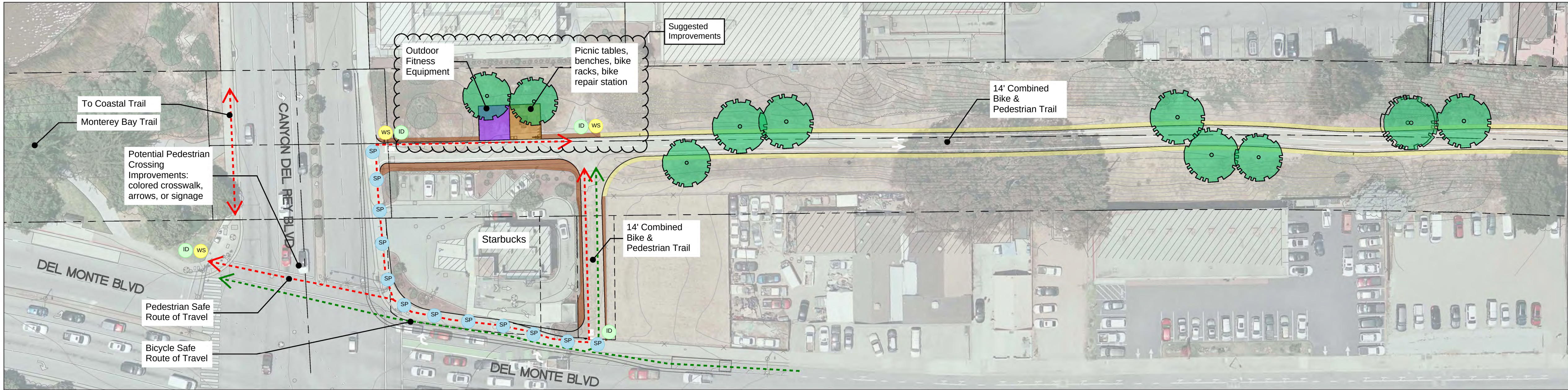
***Discussion.** The project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. While portions of the right-of-way may contain remnants of the Southern Pacific Railroad, the Monterey Branch Line, the Historic Resources Inventory and Evaluation Report (HRIER): Monterey Peninsula Light Rail Transit Project concluded that the railroad lacks sufficient integrity and is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources (JRP Historical Consulting 2010).*

The City's consulting archaeologist reviewed the trail alignment and confirmed it would not impact any known historical or cultural resources. As the rail remnants do not qualify as historical resources and no other such resources would be affected, the historical resources exception does not apply.

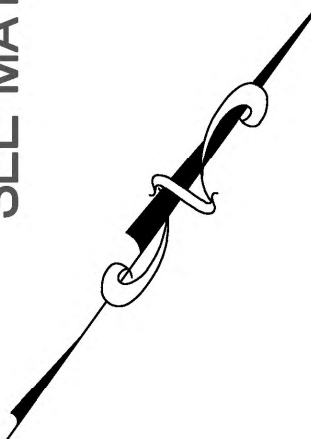
JRP Historical Consulting. 2010. *Monterey Branch Line, the Historic Resources Inventory and Evaluation Report (HRIER): Monterey Peninsula Light Rail Transit Project*. November 2010.
<https://mst.org/wp-content/media/6-Draft-Historic-Resources-Report.pdf>

Sand City Multiuse Trail Planting

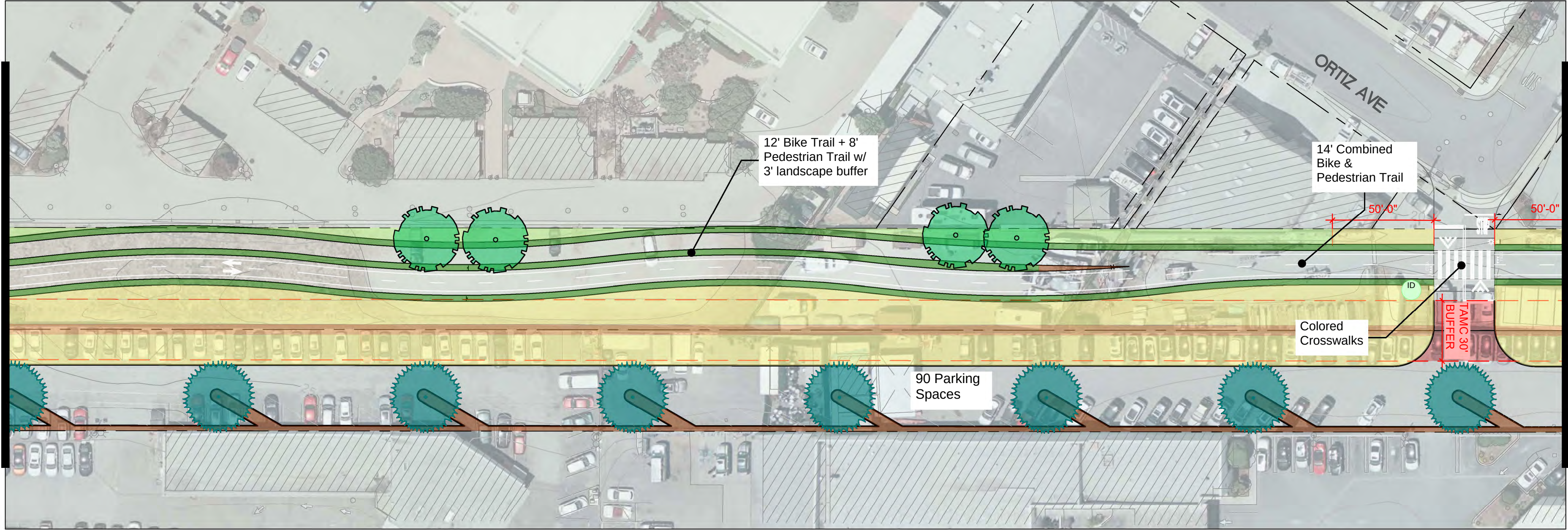
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ATTACHMENT



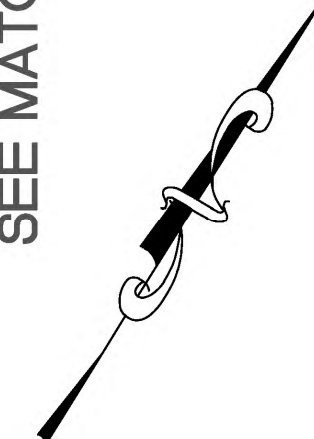
SEE MATCHLINE 1 BELOW



SEE MATCHLINE 2 BELOW



SEE MATCHLINE SHEET L-2

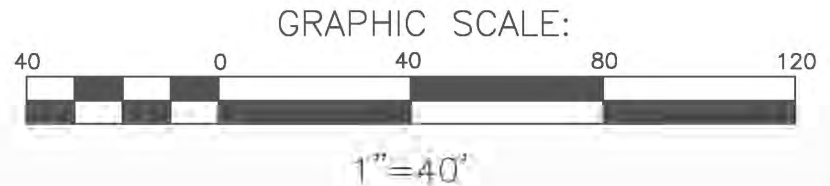


LANDSCAPE LEGEND

- Landscape Type 1
- Landscape Type 2
- Landscape Type 3
- Landscape Type 4
- Landscape Type 5
- Trail Ornamental Trees
- Trail Shade Trees
- Parking Shade Trees

SIGNAGE LEGEND

- Wayfinding Sign, Post-mounted
- Interpretive Sign, Handrail-mounted
- Trail ID: Bronze Sidewalk Plaque
- Trail ID: Post-mounted Sign
- Conflict with TAMC proposed 30-ft buffer for future rail



REVISIONS	NO.	DATE	INITIAL	DESCRIPTION
	Δ			NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION
	Δ			DRAFT SUBMITTAL

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LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTS

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425 PACIFIC STREET #201
MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA 93940
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CITY OF SAND CITY
1 PENDERGRASS WAY, SAND CITY, CA 93955

PROJECT TITLE
MULTIUSE TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

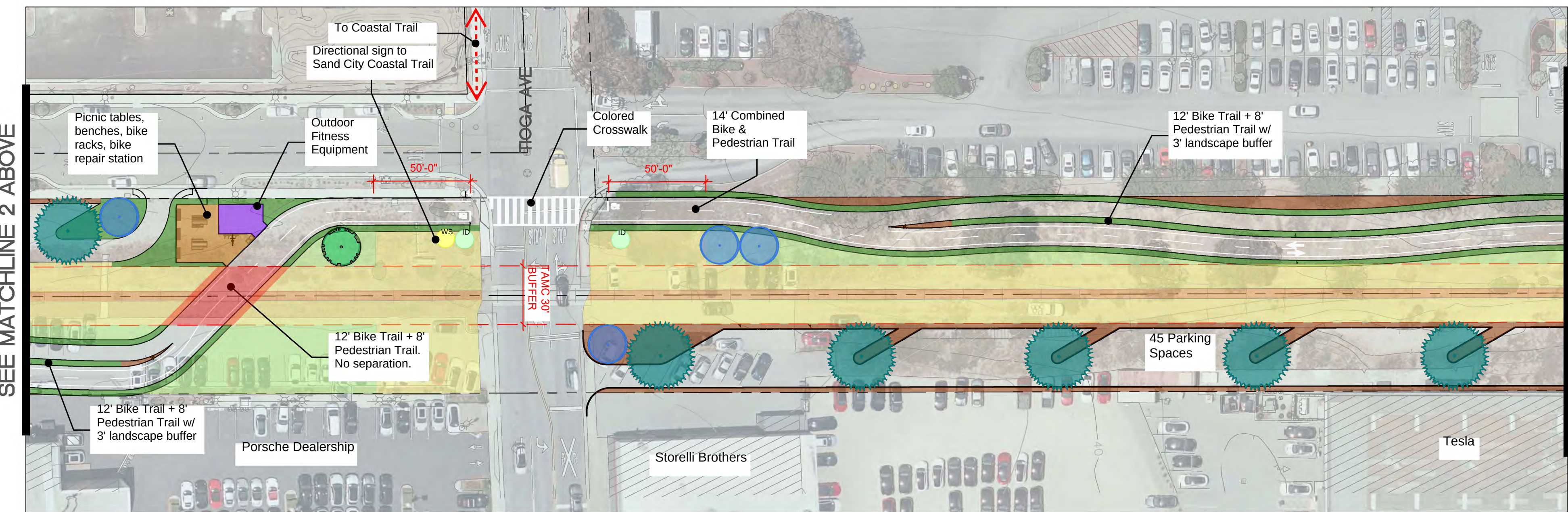
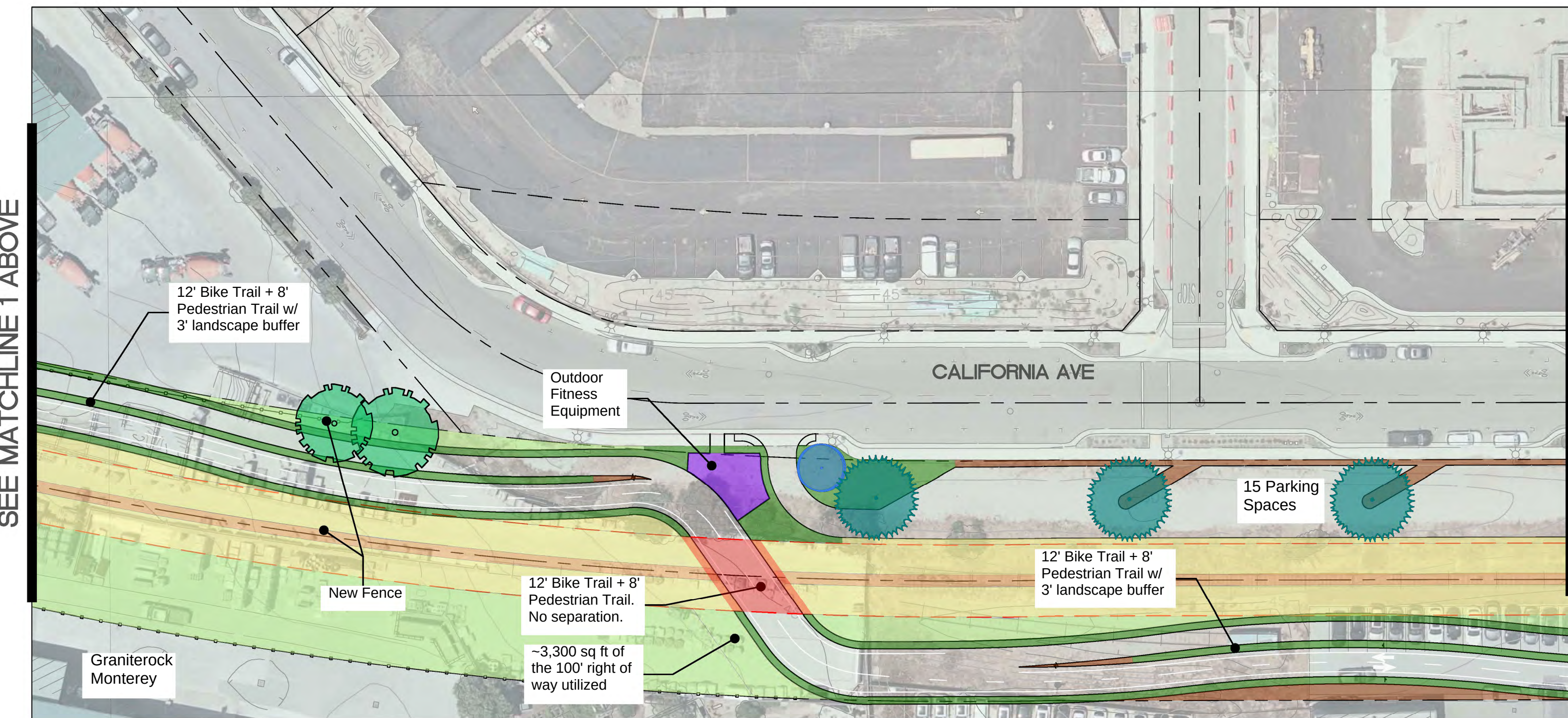
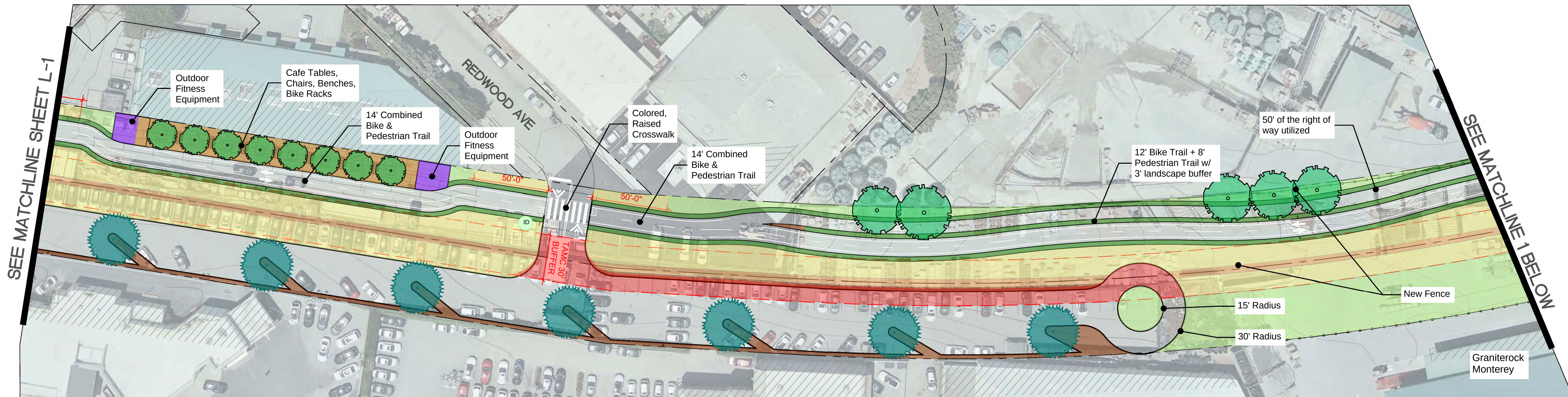
SHEET DESCRIPTION
MULTIUSE TRAIL PLANTING

DESIGNED BY: CT/AP
DATE: 06/14/2024
SCALE: AS NOTED

PROJECT NO.
24.022

DRAWING NO.
L-1.1

SHEET **1** OF **3**

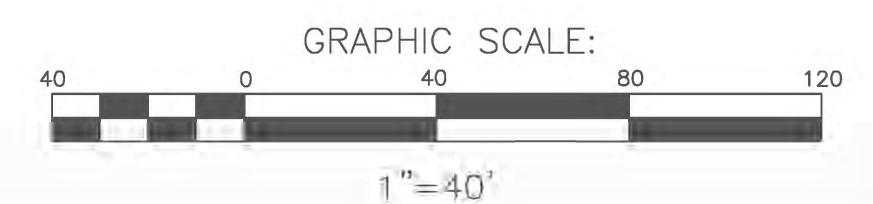


SIGNAGE LEGEND

- WS Wayfinding Sign, Post-mounted
- IS Interpretive Sign, Handrail-mounted
- SP Trail ID: Bronze Sidewalk Plaque
- ID Trail ID: Post-mounted Sign
- Conflict with TAMC proposed 30-ft buffer for future rail

LANDSCAPE LEGEND

- Landscape Type 1
- Landscape Type 2
- Landscape Type 3
- Landscape Type 4
- Landscape Type 5
- Trail Ornamental Trees
- Trail Shade Trees
- Parking Shade Trees

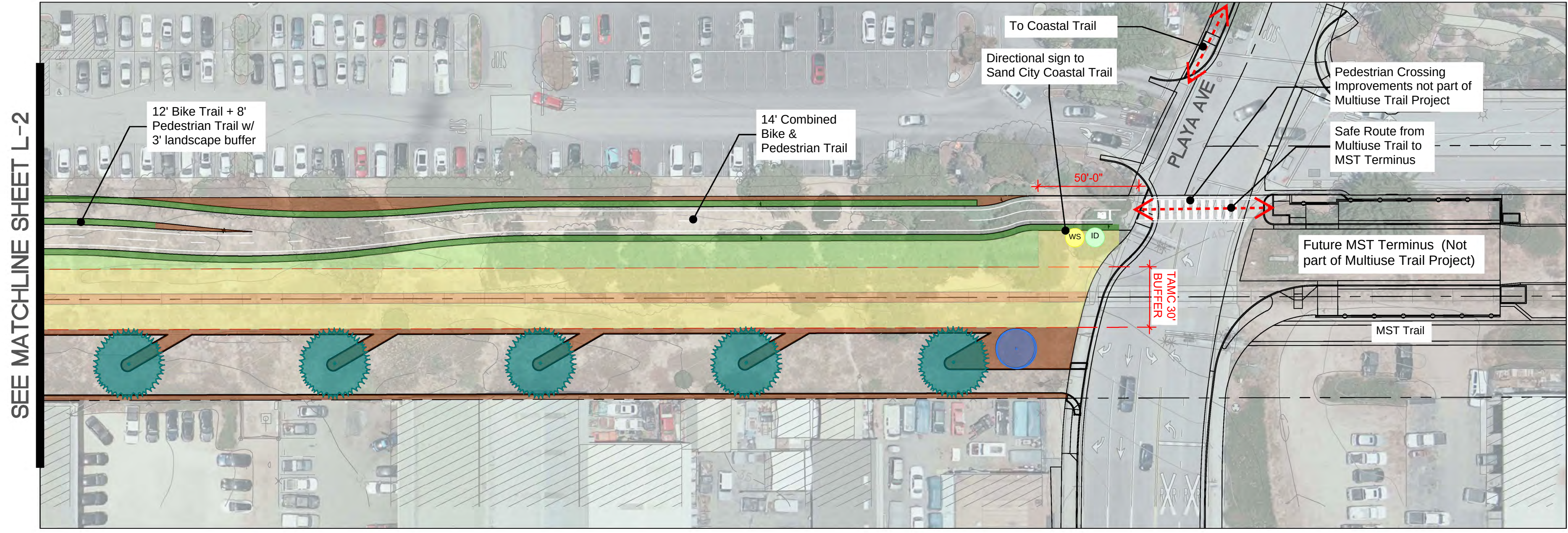


REVIEWS	NO.	DATE	INITIAL	DESCRIPTION
				NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION
				DRAFT SUBMITTAL

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CITY OF SAND CITY
1 PENDERGRASS WAY, SAND CITY, CA 93955
PROJECT TITLE
MULTIUSE TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT
SHEET DESCRIPTION
MULTIUSE TRAIL PLANTING

DESIGNED BY: CT/AP
DATE: 06/14/2024
SCALE: AS NOTED
PROJECT NO.
24.022
DRAWING NO.
L-1.2
SHEET 2 OF 3



LANDSCAPE LEGEND

- Landscape Type 1
- Landscape Type 2
- Landscape Type 3
- Landscape Type 4
- Landscape Type 5
- Trail Ornamental Trees
- Trail Shade Trees
- Parking Shade Trees

SIGNAGE LEGEND

- Wayfinding Sign, Post-mounted
- Interpretive Sign, Handrail-mounted
- Trail ID: Bronze Sidewalk Plaque
- Trail ID: Post-mounted Sign
- Conflict with TAMC proposed 30-ft buffer for future rail

TREE LEGEND

- Trail Ornamental Trees



ARBUTUS UNEDO
STRAWBERRY TREE



CEANOTHUS THYRSIFLORUS
BLUEBLOSSOM

TREE LEGEND

- Trail Shade Trees



MELALEUCA QUINQUENERVIA
PAPERBARK TREE



TRISTANIA LAURINA 'ELEGANT'
ELEGANT WATER GUM

TREE LEGEND

- Parking Shade Trees



LAGUNARIA PATERSONIA
PRIMROSE TREE



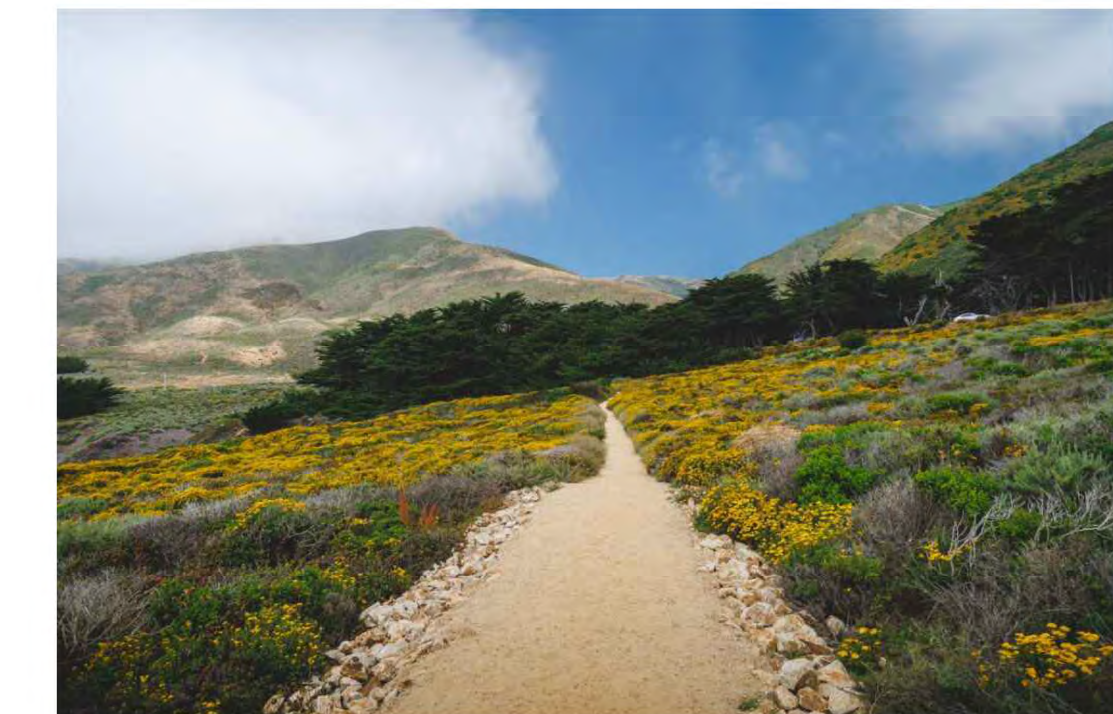
LOPHOSTEMON CONFERTUS
BRISBANE BOX



MELALEUCA LINARIIFOLIA
FLAX-LEAF PAPERBARK

LANDSCAPE LEGEND

- Landscape Type 1: Container planting - Very low (<24") woody shrubs and groundcovers (prunable, establishment period irrigated)
- Landscape Type 2: Hydroseed - Low (<36") perennials, forbs, non-woody groundcovers (mowable, non-irrigated)
- Landscape Type 3: Hydroseed - Very low (<24") grasses, perennials, forbs, wildflowers (mowable, non-irrigated)

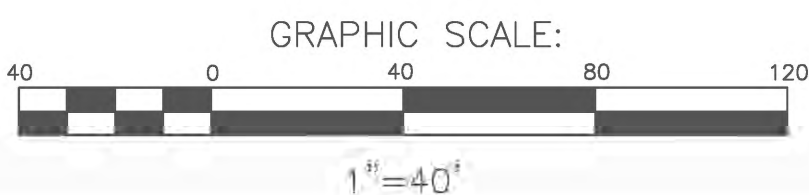


LANDSCAPE LEGEND

- Landscape Type 4: Hydroseed - California Poppy and California Buttercup (maintained with string trimmers, non-irrigated). 5-ft wide inside existing railway tracks. 5-ft wide at buried railway tracks removed along with asphalt paving
- Landscape Type 5: Recycled Wood Mulch, no color added



ESCHSCHOLZIA CALIFORNICA
CALIFORNIA POPPY



REVISES	NO.	DATE	INITIAL	DESCRIPTION
	1			NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION
	2			DRAFT SUBMITTAL

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CITY OF SAND CITY
1 PENDERGRASS WAY, SAND CITY, CA 93955
PROJECT TITLE
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SHEET DESCRIPTION
MULTIUSE TRAIL PLANTING

DESIGNED BY: CT/AP
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24.022
DRAWING NO.
L-1.3
SHEET 3 OF 3